

# Young people in old politics

Motivation, experiences and future perspectives of young  
members in the professionalised party organisation

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

“... a substantial proportion of young citizens perpetuate a classic tradition of political involvement by joining political parties ... among these young party members, we will actually find those who will lead tomorrow’s European nations. Would it not be important to understand what is in their hearts and minds before they make it to the front benches of national political scenes?”<sup>1</sup>

*Young people in old politics* sketches a contrasting approach towards the topic of this study of young party members. On the one hand, there are *young* people, who are today often portrayed as a generation of individualists with only weak ties, if any, to social milieus like class or religion. In this narrative, young people prefer short-term and rather unconventional political engagement. On the other hand, there are the institutions of *old* politics: political parties, proud but aged and solidified. They were once tied to a social milieu, later addressed larger parts of society as catch-all parties and are now evolving into professional campaign machines. At first glance, young people and political parties do not seem to fit together well. But for a few young people, party membership in one of the older established and now professionalised parties is still their day-to-day reality.<sup>2</sup> Some young people might have ended up as members simply because their

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<sup>1</sup>Bruter and Harrison (2009a, 2f.).

<sup>2</sup>*Professionalised parties* refers to those parties that have a longer history often rooted in social cleavages. They usually have an old and established organisation. They relied on voluntary political activists and elected party officers in the past but transformed their organisation in recent decades towards professional staff at the disposal of the party leadership. At the same time do they remain mass membership-based organisations that seek to enlarge their basis. Social democratic and workers’ parties are a classical example of these parties. This type of parties is at the centre of this work.

best friend took them to a campaign event, while others may envision themselves as a future minister. A third group followed a family tradition and joined as soon as they were old enough to do so. This book is about all of them. The relation between these two sides – young people and old parties – is the main focus of the following work. It is about the political participation of young people in the specific form of membership in professionalised political parties, their reasons for joining, their experiences as members and their future plans. The task of this book is to dig deeper into the interrelations between young people and political parties from the unique perspective of the young party members. What does being a party member mean for them today? And what does this mean for the future of traditional, mass membership-based and now professionalised parties?

It is established in the scholarship that young people participate in politics differently than older adults. They are less likely to be involved in the activities that are called "conventional": voting (Wattenberg 2011) and membership in political organisations that require a long-term commitment, such as political parties and trade unions. They prefer the more informal, less hierarchical and short-term oriented involvement of unconventional participation forms such as demonstrating, expressive actions like wearing badges or belonging to single-issue groups (Dalton 2011; García Albacete 2014; Martin 2012b; Norris 2011). Young people are less interested in organisations that represent traditional cleavage structures between the state and church or capital and labour. There are both generational patterns and life cycle reasons that explain why these developments occur. The former explain that economic developments in Western societies over the past decades have caused individualisation and value change (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The latter refer to the fact that the coming-of-age phase in the life cycle influences participation. The "rush hour of life" means that uncertainty about one's own future is high, which discourages long-term commitments to organisations (Hooghe and Wilkenfeld 2007; Quintelier 2007).

Regarding political parties, there is widespread agreement among scholars that they reached their height in the 1960s and 1970s, at least in Western Europe. Democratic participation rose extraordinarily and membership numbers skyrocketed. Since then, however, membership numbers have declined, and an ageing trend is obvious among

the majority of parties, meaning that the share of older party members has grown (Scarrow 2014a; van Biezen, Mair et al. 2012). In order to compensate for the lack of members, parties have professionalised their structures, increased the importance of party leadership, and begun using mass media communication to reach potential voters. As a result, parties seem to depend less on a strong membership base and instead function well with paid staff and slim leadership structures. This shift includes the decreased involvement of members as supporters during campaigns and the expansion of their one-time participation as voters in newly set up party primaries (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Panebianco 1988; Scarrow 2014a).

The existing scholarship hints at an at least problematic relationship between young people and political parties. But are parties not for young people as Wattenberg (2011) already asked about voting? It is not as simple. In the Western world, there is by no means a unified development of ageing and shrinking. There are differences across countries and party families, but other aspects such as party maturity also play a role. The developments are quite complex (Kölln 2016). Young people who join parties and become active members should not be forgotten in this discussion (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). Furthermore, parties have youth sections and try to attract young people with different strategies, such as providing them with a rather independent youth sections or with involvement in party decision-making bodies (Bennie and Russell 2012; Berry 2008; Stock 2008).

Against the background of this ambiguous relationship between young people and political parties, we can agree with what Bruter and Harrison (2009a, 2) stated: "Little is known about those young citizens who still get involved in membership organisations and particularly in political parties." The aim of this research is to start filling that gap and to disentangle the relationship between young people and political parties from the perspective of young party members. This book asks three questions about young party members: First, why do they join? Second, how do they experience their party membership? Third, what do they plan for their future in the party? This book uses an analytical framework covering aspects of change in society, in party organisations, and in the individual. The empirical part is based on individual data from interviews and an online survey among young party members in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in

Germany.

## 1.1 Theoretical Framework of the Book

The arguments about what influences young people in political parties cover developments on three different levels: the level of greater trends in society, the level of the political parties as organisations and the level of individual participants.

The great societal trends of individualisation (Beck 1986; Beck 2007; Giddens 1991) and value change (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Welzel 2005) have weakened the social ties and milieus that formerly explained political attitudes and behaviour in industrialised societies. In many instances, young people live with a different set of circumstances than their parents and grandparents. Around five decades ago, the son of a mechanical worker growing up in the Western German city of Bochum would most likely choose a job in mechanics, become a trade unionist like his father and always vote for the Social Democrats. Today, his daughter has a higher education degree, has moved to a bigger city, has a white-collar job and might vote once for the Social Democrats and once for the Liberals. She could also be an active member of the Green Party. Young people's ties with traditional milieus are weaker, and they are unlikely to become a member of a certain party due to their profession or religious affiliation. This means that their individual motives are more important to analyse when attempting to understand how the future membership of parties will develop. Furthermore, since these general societal developments are likely not unified across all young people, even those who live in one society, young party members today will be rather heterogeneous.

On the level of party organisation, scholars have discussed extensively the quantitative decline of party members (Mair and van Biezen 2001; van Biezen, Mair et al. 2012), the changing composition of the remaining party members (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010) and the parties' organisational responses to these developments (Lawson and Poguntke 2004; Poguntke, Scarrow et al. 2016; Webb et al. 2002). In the past decades, the former mass member parties' structures have become more professional, their employees have begun to compensate for the lack of activists and they have started to emphasise electoral success over political ideology. Two complementary concepts explain ideal types

of party change that compensate for the lack of members: the cartel party thesis (Katz and Mair 1994) and the electoral professional party model (Panebianco 1988). Both approaches suggest that party change has a large impact on the role of party members. This means that people joining a party today experience a different organisation than in the time of mass member parties. Parties today try to attract new members by extending rights to grassroots members. For example, parties have introduced inner party primaries to give all members a say in selecting candidates instead of only the party congress. However, opportunities for influence and careers are likely to decrease as parties replace volunteerism with professional employees and emphasise public appearance over open inner discussion. As parties focus on elections, their campaign activities might become the central issue for party activists. This is a general trend with a high impact on the day-by-day reality of party members despite differences between parties across countries, across party families and, to a small extent, even within parties (Grabow 2000).

On the individual level, two classic logics explain why someone participates in politics in general and becomes a party member in particular. The first logic is based on individual resources and acts on the assumption that socio-economic differences translate into unequal participation (Brady et al. 1995). Those better equipped with education and live in privileged social situations are more likely to participate in politics. In terms of young people's party membership, scholars showed that parents may be a key influencer for membership, but other socialisation agencies such as school play a role as well (Cross and Young 2008b; Dostie-Goulet 2009; Levinsen and Yndigegn 2015). The second logic focuses on the individual benefit that someone expects to gain from joining a party. These incentives are important in understanding what motivates individual party members. Do they join because their friends are all members? Or do they expect to have influence on policies and maybe access to political decision-makers? A classic distinction between these different incentives is the one between collective and individual benefits (Seyd and Whiteley 1992). But the application of this distinction to young party members in several European democracies showed that young people might have a more differentiated set of motivations, covering moral, social and professional benefits due to their special life stage position (Bruter and Harrison 2009b). The following



analysis uses these theoretical starting points to understand party membership of young people in today's professionalised parties.

Young party members provide the ideal focus for analysing the mechanisms of joining a party and experiencing party life today. Age remains the main divide in political parties, while other inequalities such as gender, education and income between the general population and party members narrowed in the recent past (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010). Party membership has become increasingly uncommon for young people, while other forms of political participation have increased. Thus, most young people who join a party do not do so due to a lack of alternatives but instead because of specific reasons (Whiteley and Seyd 2007). They join an organisation where they will find mainly older people, facing not only the divide as a new member in an existing organisation with established habits, but also the issue of age differences and being in the minority as young people. Since parties remain the main catalyst for future political offices, this group of young people also includes many future political leaders. Understanding how structural changes of party organisations influence young members' activities will extend the knowledge about the future of parties and representative democracy as such as well as about the group of potential future political leaders.

Despite strong evidence for age being an important factor in understanding the mechanisms of party membership, this aspect has not yet gotten enough attention in membership-related research. Studies of party membership increased the knowledge about the individual perspective of party members in the past decades. Some scholars identified the heterogeneity of motives and what drives members to join parties and become active members (Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Seyd and Whiteley 2002; Spier et al. 2011; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994). Although some of these studies asked about the age of the members, differences between party members across age groups have been analysed only inadequately and were mostly restricted to a basic elaboration of the share of young members. Nonetheless, the focus on age is not new to the study of political parties. Scholars have analysed parties with a focus on their ageing membership and the role of age on their leading staff (Munimus 2012). Additionally, some case studies exist on how parties integrate young people into their decision-making and organisational structures (Ellis 2002; Ellis 2005; Godewerth-Pollmann 2007). The role

of party youth sections in building future careers was proven to be important (Gruber 2009b; Gruber 2010; Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004). However, these works investigated the relationship between parties and young people either from an organisational perspective or an ex-post perspective of political leaders on young people. What is missing is the individual perspective of young party members.

This work seeks to start filling that gap. Scholars know little about the experiences of young members when they join a professionalised party and about the activity patterns they develop as members. To be able to see where parties are heading, it is important to understand their young members. Young party members' motives in joining and their membership stability will shape political parties in the near future, especially because at least some of the young party members are potential future decision-makers. Knowing what makes young people join a party and how the party impacts their activity will help scholars understand how these parties will develop in the future. So far, there is no study looking into the effects of general trends such as individualisation, organisational party change and individual resources and motives on young people's party membership. This book seeks to integrate these well-understood developments into a comprehensive analytical framework. The empirical base of the book is a rich and unique data set that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods for its analysis in studying young members in a traditional mass member party that professionalised in recent years. This book serves as an influential case in understanding young people's party membership in "old politics".

## 1.2 Research Questions and Strategy

Despite the broad knowledge about developments on the three levels elaborated above, scholars still lack an understanding of how these developments work together and influence the reality of young party members in the "old politics" of professionalised parties. This book examines how these three developments work together with a three-step research question focusing on (1) why young people join political parties, (2) the experiences of young party activists and (3) the young members' perspectives on the future.

## RQ1: What made young party members join a party?

The first research question deals with the reasons why young members join a political party. Being a party member begins with the decision to join a party. This sounds trivial, but without this decision, there would not be party members at all. Even though there is a good set of explanations for party membership motivations (Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Whiteley and Seyd 1996; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994), the application of this knowledge to the specific group of young members has just begun and is still built on some strong assumptions, especially the idea that party members have a dominant motivation to join a party (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). It also does not incorporate what is known about the role of the socialisation of young people in families (Cross and Young 2008b; Young and Cross 2002). Taking into account what is known about the weakening of milieu ties, it is likely that the socialisation impact is different depending on how much families, especially parents, are involved in the party (Boonen 2015). Given that increasing individualisation allows for more choices regarding political involvement and that educational attainment is increasing, there might also be new areas where socialisation occurs that have an impact on the choice to become a party member.

This work follows the idea that different member types among young party members can be identified based on their motivations for membership. But it goes beyond earlier approaches by developing a typology based on incentives for party membership that also takes resources into account. In the first step, young party activists with a deeper involvement in party activity are interviewed to understand the whole process that lies behind their access to membership as well as their rationalisations for choosing to become a member (Chapter 4). In the second step, the different patterns of joining that appear in the interviews provide the starting point for developing a typology of party members based on survey data for all young party members. This includes their resources as independent variables to better explain the types of members (Chapter 6).

## RQ2: How do young members experience the party?

The second research question deals with the experiences of young members when they are active in the party. The knowledge about party change is comprehensive, especially regarding the organisational changes of the past decades (Piletcross 2014; Gauja 2016). But the perspective of party members on the outcome of these changes, meaning the day-to-day reality in the party, is lacking. Older members might be able to give an idea of how changes feel like for a party member, but, for young members, the references to the "good old times" are nothing more than history. The members who are 35 years old and under have not experienced previous times. They made a voluntary decision to join a comparably professionalised party. They might already be a preselected group of people that diverges from the average in their age group in that they like hierarchical politics. Maybe they intentionally chose such an organisation because they envision themselves among its top ranks in the future. But there is also the chance that they are still rather ideologically motivated and are frustrated because they do not see opportunities for growth in the party (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 141-146).

Understanding how young people adapt to a professional and campaign-oriented party will help determine if these parties are confronting a growing discontent among their own members or if they are now attracting mainly those that fit in with their organisational demands. This work starts with the idea that the centralisation and professionalisation of parties affect party members. The interviews with young activists provide the empirical base to test if these changes have an impact on young party members' activities (Chapter 5).

## RQ3: How do young members envision their future involvement?

The last research question focuses on young party members' perspectives on the future. The knowledge about their motivations for joining reveals who these young people are. The analysis of their experiences helps to explain how they perceive the party. But the question of who will be the future of those parties depends on what future young party members envision for themselves in the party. There are different possibilities for young party members. These may include either a future career in the party or silent

membership in the ranks, which is called the division between "careerists and believers" (Panebianco 1988). While political leaders often have a background in the youth section of their parties (Gruber 2009a; Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004; Micus 2005), it is still unclear what determined who is in the pool of future leaders and what distinguishes them from those who cannot imagine taking up a position in the future. A similar gap exists in the knowledge about those who choose to leave the party. Some analyses tried to determine what made members leave the party (Dose, Fischer and Golla 2016; Rohrbach 2011), but little is known the nascent alienation of party members that lead to party exit.

The last empirical chapter of the book investigates what young members plan for their future in the party, covering their future career plans and whether or not they plan to leave the party. This research question seeks to answer how influence factors on the societal level, on the level of the party organisation and on the individual level influence young party members' future career plans and whether they want to remain members of the party. I elaborate four different logics out of these factors that might explain what young party members envision for their future in the party and test their explanatory power as well as how they act together (Chapter 7). These three research questions guide through this study to understand more about the reality of young party members in aged and professionalised party organisations.

## Research Strategy

This research is based on individual-level data from members of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) who are under 36 years old. This case selection covers young party members in a traditional ageing and former mass membership-based party of the social-democratic/socialist party family. The age limit of 36 years incorporates changing patterns of education-to-work transitions and settling down while also covering longer educational processes. The SPD members provide an influential case study for our topic. The party is one of two dominant parties in the German party system. Even though these types of parties have been hit hard by the decline of party members in the past decades, the influence of these old and aged political parties on political decision-making in parliamentary democracy cannot be ignored, and Germany is a perfect case to

illustrate this (Saalfeld 2002). At the same time, their lack of young membership poses a severe problem for them in the future when the older generations of party members grow older and die out (Dose and Fischer 2014).

The research strategy has a mixed methods approach. In the first step, semi-structured interviews with young party activists provide the baseline of data to open the research field and to get insights into the mechanisms of young people's membership from the perspective of young active party members. This data serves as the basis for the analysis of the process of joining the party (Research Question 1) and the examination of experiences during party activism (Research Question 2). The open approach of the semi-structured interviews addresses the fact that there is decent knowledge about some aspects of the research questions, such as the logic of incentives for joining and sound theories about party change, but the important connection between those theories and the special situation of young party members and their perspective of joining and their party activities is still missing. The interview data is analysed using a code-based qualitative content analysis methodology, incorporating deductive and inductive techniques for developing the coding scheme (Schreier 2012; Schreier 2014).

The quantitative analysis is based on survey data (N=4006) from an online survey among all young members in the party. Its first part uses latent class analysis to identify groups of young party members based on their motivations and also considers their resources (Research Question 1). This part allows for the further development of the different patterns of joining that became apparent in the interviews. The second part of the quantitative analysis applies logistic regression analysis to understand what influences different future perspectives on the party (Research Question 3). Combining these two data sources helps to improve the understanding about the changing face of parties from the view of their young members. Patterns of joining and experiencing the party organisation can be identified from the interviews with activists with a broad experience of party activity. This adds to the understanding of the rationalisations that these young people develop. The survey data allows this study to go beyond the individual perspective and add an analysis of systematic patterns in the behaviour and the predispositions of the young party members.

### 1.3 Plan of the Book

In this introductory chapter I discussed the research questions and the main goals of this thesis and gave a short overview of the data. The next two chapters prepare the empirical analysis. Chapter 2 develops the analytical framework that will guide the further analysis. This part discusses the three levels of influence on young people's participation in political parties: the macro-level of general trends in society, the meso-level of trends in party organisational change and the micro-level of individual aspects of party membership. On the level of society, developments of individualisation and value change are introduced and discussed in terms of their relevance for the research questions. On the level of party organisations, two models that depict party change, the cartel party thesis and the electoral professional party model, are elaborated based on their impact on party membership. On the individual level, resource-based and incentive-based explanations are examined in order to understand who joins a party. These three levels provide a comprehensive framework of analysis for the three research questions elaborated above.

In Chapter 3, I introduce the research design and the baseline of data for the analysis. Furthermore, it provides a first insight into the group that is at the focus of this research by describing the young SPD members as well as their context. This first uni- and bivariate data analysis shows some important characteristics of the young party members. They are a highly active minority in the area of political participation and do not represent their age group very well in terms of their participation and political opinion. They are also different from their fellow older party members in certain aspects, especially in their educational attainment. The brief analysis shows that it is worth looking into this particular group more specifically. This chapter sets the stage for further analysis by emphasising the particularities of the case study.

The following four chapters provide the empirical analysis. Chapters 4 and 5 are based on semi-structured interviews with young party activists with a high involvement in the party and Chapters 6 and 7 are based on a survey among all party members who are under 36 years old. Chapter 4 looks into the process of joining the party and how young party activists rationalise why they joined. It becomes clear that both incentives

and resources help to understand what makes young people join a traditional party today, but these explanatory logics must be combined to fully understand the process of joining. This chapter shows that there are several different patterns rather than a typical pathway into the party. These patterns depend on what personal background the individual member has and whether party membership is their first political activity or a result of previous activities.

In Chapter 5, I investigate the activists' experiences in the party, focusing on the impact of professionalisation and centralisation of parties. The results of the analysis show that the young activists in general accept the party's focus on electoral campaigning. Nevertheless, they are critical towards their party and are by no means a preselected group that is partial to hierarchical organisations. Many stated that they are torn between their ideological aims and the party's aim to maximise votes. The conclusions that they draw from these inner conflicts already show the different types of members. Some accept ideological compromises as a natural by-product of their aim to be part of an organisation that provides access to power while others concentrate their activities in the youth section and try to strengthen its role as an inner opposition to the party leadership.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the broader picture of young party members beyond the highly involved activists. In these chapters, I take the patterns that I identified in the previous two chapters and test whether they also appear in the broader group of all young party members. Chapter 6 brings together resource- and incentive-based explanations for party membership and develops a typology of young party members based on their motivations. Three types of young party members are identified based on their motivations: *Take-all Members*, *Ideologist Members*, and *Reluctant Members*. The first two types have a heterogeneous set of motivations, covering all three types of moral, professional and social incentives in the first case and clearly neglecting professional incentives in the second case. The third and very small type does not accept any incentives as being important for them, thus providing a new puzzle. The integration of resources also improved the understanding of these types at large. The duration of membership especially influences what motivates the young party members, which suggests that there are some changes in the motivational settings of party members over



time.

Chapter 7 looks into young party members' perspectives on the future. It analyses what makes young members envision a future career in the party and what makes them think about leaving the party in the near future. The analysis shows that experiences in the party organisation and individual motivational settings explain both perspectives, but their explanatory power differs in explaining why some members seek a career in the party and why some think about exiting the party. It becomes clear that those aspects relating to broader societal development, such as the materialist/post-materialist divide or the ties with social milieus, do not influence these thoughts about a party-related future. The perspectives are influenced by how hierarchical the young party members perceive the organisation's decision-making. For career seekers, the comparison with other party members matters a lot. This chapter confirms the previous assumption that there are different types of young party members, which can be very broadly summarised into those that seek careers, those that keep up the party's ranks and those that are about to exit. The final Chapter 8 brings together the results from the four empirical chapters and discusses the scope and the implications of the findings.

## Chapter 2

# Young People in Professionalised Parties

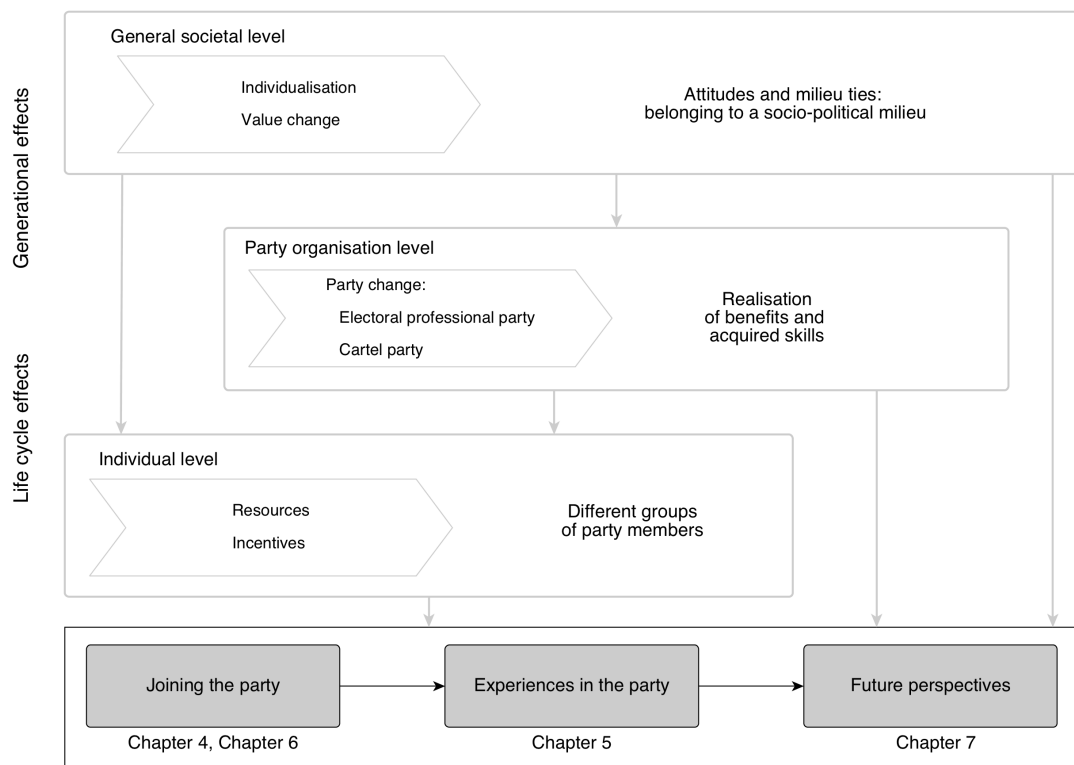
The underlying questions of this work target a generational change: How do today's young people fit in organisations of old politics and how will their role in these organisations influence the organisations in the future? This work focuses on young party members in particular because of developments that have occurred both in society and in party organisations, which have in turn impacted individual decision-making. Young party members grow up with dissolving ties to social milieus. Their transition into adulthood is influenced by social change. The dissolution of milieus increases their choices for political opinions and behaviour. They have never experienced the political organisations of the past that were based on class and mass membership, but they are likely familiar with political parties' professional election campaigning of recent years. In order to understand how the membership of professionalised parties will develop in the future, the explicit focus on young members provides the ideal empirical example.

Developments on three levels prompted the research questions of this study. On the macro-level of society, the circumstances for young people have changed as the bonds between the individual and traditional political milieus have weakened. Due to industrialisation and economic development, Western societies are experiencing increased individualisation and changing values (Beck 1986; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Inglehart 1990). These developments have influenced political parties on the meso-level. Since their heyday in the mid-twentieth century, parties have seen their membership

shrink dramatically. In response, the parties have instituted structural changes, using new means of communication and establishing professionalised campaign organisations that are intended to work well even without a mass base of followers. Their policy packages also have become more oriented towards the maximisation of votes and no longer adhere to clear-cut ideologies (Katz and Mair 1994; Panebianco 1988). These developments have similarly impacted the micro-level of the individual. The decline of traditional milieus and their ties to parties have made personal reasons for joining a party more relevant. What makes someone join a party has been explained traditionally by resources, such as time, money and skills, (Brady et al. 1995) or incentives, where members make a cost-benefit calculation of the incentives that the party provides (Seyd and Whiteley 1992). As parties have changed, so too have the incentives that individuals can expect from membership. These changes, along with the fact that social milieus do not predetermine membership in the way they did in the past, have increased the role of individual reasons for membership.

Clearly there are manifold links between societal developments, party change and individual reasons for party membership. I argue in this chapter for a model of young party membership that combines these links into an analytical framework. Furthermore, the model connects the individual-level explanations of resources and incentives, as the resources young members should have vary and may also have an effect on what kind of cost-benefit calculation they make. Figure 2.1 provides a graphical overview of this framework.

This chapter outlines the analytical frame for the empirical analysis. First, I discuss the particularities of studying age-related questions, which hinge on the difference between generational effects and life cycle effects and its implications for political behaviour studies. Second, I explain the analytical framework for this analysis and discuss the factors that influence young people as party members. On the level of societal changes, the influential factors are the trends of individualisation and value change, and on the level of the party organisation, the influential factor is the centralisation and professionalisation of parties. On the level of the individual, resource-based explanations and incentive-based explanations of party membership are explicated. The chapter closes with an integration of these three level explanations into the framework



**Figure 2.1: Analytical framework** of the book, sketching three levels of influence on joining, experiences in the party and future perspectives of young party members.

for the following analysis.

## 2.1 The Young Generation and the Life Stage of Youth

Scholars study young people because they are distinct from adults, mainly due to two different reasons. First, because they belong to the same age cohort. Young people have similar experiences and are exposed to similar societal characteristics. Second, young people are in a special stage of their lives between childhood and adulthood, giving them a certain social role. This life stage is closely related to their individual ageing process, which refers to the accumulation of habits as well as past experiences from which to learn during future development (Goerres 2009, 29-34). It is important to distinguish between *generational effects* that occur during the time young people were born and raised and *life-cycle effects* that occur during the specific life stage of young people between childhood and adulthood. These distinct concepts are often difficult to measure empirically, but their theoretical distinction is critical in understanding their long-term

implications. While life cycle effects are temporary effects that change throughout an individuals' life, generational effects have an enduring effect and the potential to change society within some decades. Both effects are relevant in understanding what is special about the political participation of young people.

## Generational Effects on Political Participation

People who are born and live around the same time in a society form a socio-political *generation* (Mannheim 1928) if they share experiences different from those of previous and successive generations. This does not mean that all members of a certain group have a unified experience. Different members of a generation will be in different development stages and they might be affected in very different ways by what they experience (van den Broek 1999). But the experiences of a certain cohort that differ from people born in other decades equalise the social imprint of that cohort in a way that they are called a generation. Such a generation does not only share similar experiences; the social character might also contribute to future social change (Ryder 1965).

Experiences are especially relevant in building a generation if they occur at a young age as they have the potential to influence people throughout their lives. Experiences of war, economic depression and times of mass mobilisation have a long-term effect on how individuals develop attitudes and political behaviour. Well-known examples of generational imprints are the *New Deal Generation* that grew up in the United States during the 1930s, the post-World War II generation in Europe or the generation that grew up with the experiences of the Vietnam War in the mid-twentieth century. For the generation of young adults in the United States today, the Iraq War is a crucial event for political participation since opponents of the Iraq War policy of the Bush administration showed higher levels of civic engagement a few years later (Moffett et al. 2014). These events did not have the same effect on each individual, but, on a large scale, they influenced later political behaviour, including party alignment and voting behaviour of the respective generations (Beck and Jennings 1979; Mettler 2005). For this study of young party members, it is thus important to note that there can be aspects rooted in their joint experience that *distinguishes* them from older partisans with long-term effects on their political behaviour.

There are several potential social imprints for the generation that is the focus of this study. For young Europeans, the economic crisis in 2008 and its negative effect on their labour market integration could become one of their key moments of political socialisation. Unemployment as a "youth issue" and young people's precarious position in the workforce, mostly in the Southern countries, has been identified as a cause for their political radicalisation and estrangement from political elites (Soler et al. 2014; Williamson 2013). The young generation in Europe, which usually refers to people born after 1980, has been influenced in the past years by economic and status insecurity and the loss of what the previous *Baby Boomer generation* knew as a matter of course: the prospect of rising living standards and upward mobility (Roberts 2012). Since Germany has lower rates of youth unemployment compared to other European countries, some scholars have suggested that young people's politicisation may not be as strong. However, German young people are also distanced from established institutions like parties (Hurrelmann, Albert et al. 2016). In this study, I expect that these general aspects of generational influence shape the realities of the young party members, although tracing their long-term influence is beyond the study's scope.

Generational imprints help explain differences in political behavior between age groups in a way that allows for their designation as political generations their activity. In voting research, turnout differences between age groups are well known. The younger generation is less likely to vote than older generations. These results are consistent across the majority of national elections in Western democracies as well as in supra-national elections, such as elections for the European Parliament (Bhatti and Hansen 2012; Clarke et al. 2004; Dalton 2008; Konzelmann et al. 2012; Persson et al. 2013; Phelps 2012; Wattenberg 2011). Voting is not the only example of generational differences in political activity. The same is true for party membership. The mid-twentieth century was the high point for mass member parties, at least in Western European democracies. Young people joined and made up a large share of the overall membership in many countries. This is different for today's young generation. In most Western countries, parties recruit a much smaller share of the electorate than two decades ago, and young people especially avoid membership in these organisations. As a result, the majority of party members in Western democracies are adults and elderly

people over the age of 60 (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Webb et al. 2002).<sup>1</sup> For today's young people in Western democracies, party membership is likely a political habit associated with the generations of their parents and grandparents, in general leaving them disenchanted with party politics despite political interests (for Germany see e.g. Hurrelmann, Albert et al. (2016)). Such experience shapes a political generation and might have an enduring effect on an individual's location in society (Mannheim 1928). In this study, this refers to the general attitude of this generation towards party membership.

### Life-cycle Effects on Political Participation

The current *life stage* of an individual affects attitudes and behaviour because the chronological age of an individual is an important structural characteristic of modern societies. The tripartite system of youth, adult life and seniority structures corresponds to the course of working life into preparation, participation and retirement phases (Kohli 1985, 3). This feature of modern societies creates similarities between those in the same chronological age and exposes them to similar experiences (Settersten 2006). Primary and secondary school students have similar daily routines of school, homework and spare time. University students share experiences that are different not only from school children but also from working adults. Those in the workforce have similar daily routines and, if they are in the same age group, most likely share comparable family situations. Even though these experiences are not unique and are embedded in the local, cultural and historical context, this institutionalisation of a life course structures societies to a vast extent (Kohli 1985; Kohli 2002) and establishes youth a specific phase in life.

Youth is distinct from adulthood because it is its pre-stage and preparation phase. As young people develop into adults, their values that guide their behaviour, including their political behavior, evolve (Havighurst 1972). Young people "are still forming a habit of political participation" (Quintelier and Deth 2014, 154) and they still establish political attitudes, both as a pre-condition for political behaviour and as a result of such behaviour (Hooghe and Wilkenfeld 2007; Quintelier and Deth 2014). Voting is a

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<sup>1</sup>Exceptions to this rule are mainly the "younger" democracies of the Mediterranean like Spain and Greece, where participation of the generation of people 60 and older is still low due to the lack of political freedom during their youth, which can also be seen as a generational imprint.

prominent example. Turnout differs across age because young people are learning voters and still have to develop a "habit" of voting before they grow into adults. Although this is not a linear development among young people and some might never develop the habit, there is strong evidence of the habitualisation of voting over time when the social pressure for voting also increases (Bergh 2014; Bhatti, Hansen and Wass 2016; Dinas 2012; Panagopoulos and Abrajano 2014; Plutzer 2002).

A second aspect of youth is its inherent distinction from adulthood. Young people want to define themselves, strive for independence and find meaning in their lives. This makes them critical of adults, leading to a distinction in political habits and activity. This aspect of the life cycle also explains differences in voting patterns. Young people are more open to voting for new parties, while older people tend to vote for established parties. Older people experienced the established parties in government before and tend to know what to expect and what they might lose (Barnes 1989). Party membership differences according to age follow similar arguments. New and rising parties might be able to attract a young membership when they cover issues that are important for young people and enjoy extraordinary media attention. This was the case for the Piratenpartei (Pirate Party) in Germany that received only 2% of the total vote but 8% of the votes from the age group of 18-25-year-olds in the national elections in 2013. These young people were mostly first-time voters.<sup>2</sup>

The behavioural inertia and the distinction of young people and adults when examining voting behavior also apply to party membership. The formative nature of youth may reduce the chances that young people join a party that requires a long-term commitment. The tendency to differentiate themselves from adults also may decrease the likelihood of young people joining a party that appears as "old" or "aged" to them. However, once young people join a party, it should be more likely that they will remain members throughout their adult life instead of leaving the party and join a different organisation. This makes political participation during the life stage of youth an important area to study for understanding the future of party membership (Hooghe 2004).

The difference between life cycle and generational effects is important theoretically but difficult to grasp empirically. While age-related differences rooted in the life stage

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<sup>2</sup>Second vote, results from Bundeswahlleiter (2014). See also Bieber (2012) and Jun (2013).



are unstable for the individual and have no enduring effect on society, generational effects leave a long-term imprint and have the potential to change society in the long run. Thus, the impacts of generational and life cycle effects for societal change are different, yet there are difficulties distinguishing these effects in practice. The example of party membership illustrates these difficulties. When young people avoid professionalised parties because they view them as old and aged institutions, it could possibly be because of their life stage and the need to distinguish themselves from an "old" organisation. In this case, their attitudes might change once they become older. However, it could also be a result of their generational experience in which members of party organisations are the age of their parents and grandparents, leading to a long-term effect of alienation. This example also illustrates the potential connection between the two logics. Young people join parties only seldomly, but they do participate in politics, in single-issue groups or in one-time activities like demonstrating (van Biezen and Kopecký 2014; Whiteley 2011). This reflects young people's openness for new and unusual forms of participation, but, as previous scholarship on the stability of political behaviour showed, it may also shape the future political participation of young people.

Given the interdependence between life stage and generational effects, an analysis of age-related political participation must integrate a combination of different explanations. Linking this insight to the aforementioned different levels of influence, I argue that generational effects are more likely to explain developments in society and party organisations while life cycle effects apply to the individual. The following section also shows that generational effects influence the experience of a certain life stage: being young.

## Modern Transition from Youth to Adulthood

What is special about young people today? The socialisation of young people into adulthood is contingent upon the society in which it takes place and is subject to change over time. Young people today share several experiences that are very different from those of their parents or grandparents. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, the historical traits of industrialisation institutionalised the life cycle around the working life, distinguishing between preparation for the labour market, participation in the workforce and

retirement. People of the same age used to be in very similar life situations, shaped by compulsory schooling and institutionalised job training. This modern life stage of *youth* prepared young people for their adult life through school, apprenticeship or university (Kohli 1985).

This institutionalised life course has blurred in recent decades. The boundaries between youth and adulthood have become less clear, and experiences of education and work-life integration have diversified (Kohli 2002; Wohlrab-Sahr 1992). The social markers of the transition from youth to adulthood and education to work, along with family formation, have changed slightly. Compared to previous generations, having a full-time job, living together with a spouse and having children occur later, if at all, in the lives of young people today. Their education lasts longer, and they may switch between education and work, often as a result of failing to integrate into the labour market (Hurrelmann and Quenzel 2013). The phases of youth and adulthood are overlapping, lacking patterns of normality. Some scholars have spoken of a new stage between youth and adulthood called *emerging adulthood* (Arnett 2000; Arnett 2006), although this proposition is contested. These developments are not equal across all social and cultural groups, but a general pattern of postponement of adulthood exists, especially for young people who have access to better education (Bynner 2005). The result of these changing patterns into adulthood is relative status insecurity for the young people who are "lost in transition" (Hurrelmann and Quenzel 2013).

Against this background, it is imperative to define who the *Young people* in this analysis are. In the scholarship on young people, age limits vary, although most work covers those who are in their twenties and younger (Gaiser et al. 2010; Hooghe 2004; Martin 2012a). As described above, it is impossible to define a clear-cut line between young people and adults based on chronological age. The coming of age of young people is a complex process that is not only highly individual but also connected to societal developments (Hurrelmann 2007). In the empirical part of this study, the term young people includes everyone under the age of 36 year. This arbitrary line is set at 36 years old not only to make a clear distinction, but also to take the developments that shape young people's realities into consideration. The age of 36 years old is far above the legal age limit in most parts of the world, but it includes the *emerging adulthood*

(Arnett 2004) of people who are neither children or adults, a stage which may last until their thirties. This age limit also covers the lengthy educational processes and later integration into the labour market of those who get graduate degrees. Additionally, the age limit of the youth organisation of the party in this study is set at 36 years old. In the party in the study, those who are younger than 36 years old are viewed as being young and requiring their own organisational structures.

## 2.2 Individualisation and Value Change

As economic development and modernisation have influenced Western societies during the nineteenth and twentieth century, two large trends have emerged that are changing the face of these societies: individualisation and value change. Basic structures of modernity, including the nation-state, the nuclear family and milieu ties, have become weaker. The result is more opportunities for individual decision-making about diverse aspects of life, leading to increased risks and insecurity at the same time. Beck (1986) and Giddens (1991) deem this process individualisation. Furthermore, the satisfaction of basic material needs has shifted values and political priorities towards more post-materialist issues. This has been identified as *value change* (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Flanagan 1987). Both developments indicate that the political and societal conditions for young people today differ from those a generation ago. This has significant implications for political parties that are based on traditional cleavages, as it reduces their ability to organise people from a particular milieu.

### Individualisation

Individualisation characterises a development where individuals face fewer constraints like cultural or religious bonds and class ties, but they now have to make decisions about important aspects of their lives that could have unpredictable impacts. Economic developments in the nineteenth and twentieth century have initiated a transformation of basic institutions in industrialised societies into a *second modernity* (Beck and Lau 2005). The main structures of the first modernity – the nation, the family, gender roles, and cultural and class ties – are losing their formative power. Former clear-cut concepts

are blurred: What counts as a family when marriage is no longer the norm? Who is a citizen when migration is a widespread phenomenon? Who builds the working class when jobs become insecure in highly-qualified professions and higher education becomes more accessible for different parts of society? The social ties of industrialised societies have weakened, and individuals are increasingly freed from the demands of this old order (Beck and Lau 2005, 525f.). Religion, class and family are less powerful in determining occupation, family formation, and political orientation, and decisions about these life events remain contested throughout the life cycle. These increased opportunities are a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they allow for more individual decision-making, but, on the other hand, people are more responsible for the results of their decisions. People have begun to perceive the results of their decisions as individual risks that are an unavoidable outcome of the new modernity (Beck 1986; Giddens 1991).

This assumption of individualisation faced criticism as an imagination of a classless society. Some scholars argued that individualisation applies mainly to an educated middle class instead of all parts of the society (Atkinson 2007; Brannen and Nilsen 2005; Woodin 2005). The second modernity theory answered that criticism by stating that the allocation of risks remains tied to the social structure of society, accumulating risks at the bottom and opportunities at the top of society (Beck 1986, 35). In comparison to a traditional class-based society, socio-political ties in the second modernity are weaker, and they do not structure life as much as in the past. The individual has more room for decision-making about lifestyles, political beliefs and opinions. Even more critical perspectives on individualisation theory attested a general decline of milieu ties and a "destandardization of the lifecourse" (Brannen and Nilsen 2002, 514), that reduce the power of traditional milieus, class and location, especially during the transition from youth to adulthood (Brannen and Nilsen 2005; Kohli 2002; MacDonald et al. 2005; Paulgaard 2006).

Due to this process of individualisation, the biographies of today's young people are more diversified than those of their parents and grandparents. Their patterns of relationships with family and friends may be more individual because the sequence of social markers changed in light of increased opportunities. For example, leaving the parental home is now followed by periods of living alone instead of a direct transition

into married cohabitation with a spouse. Shifts between education, work and further education also coincide with flexibility in personal relations – marriage and building a family is only one option among others, and even then the family may look different than in the past. Cohabitation and parenthood occur later in life, if at all. Across almost all European countries, insecurity in labour market integration affected family formation, resulting in a delay of parenthood for economic reasons and to ensure flexibility. This holds especially in Germany, which is a conservative welfare state where employment and family formation are strongly connected (Blossfeld and Mills 2010; Kretsos 2010). The so-called *rush hour of life*, during which young adults settle their professional as well as their personal lives, is heading towards a new pattern that is "late, protracted, and complex" (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). Young people have to make various decisions about their lives, and, unlike the generation of their parents, society does not provide them with clear guidelines.

The later and more individual path to adulthood of young people should impact their political participation. In recent scholarship, the transition into adulthood served as a factor that explains the voting decline among young people. If a young person temporarily moves to another place for education, the benefit of voting for an unknown candidate might be small. Administrative requirements, such as the need to vote in the hometown, also could be a problem in times of mobility. The general pattern of young people abstaining from voting shows differences between countries, where those countries with more heterogeneous maturity patterns have increased disparities in voting between the old and young (Smets 2012). The transition into adulthood also affects political behaviour beyond voting. Comparative research in Europe shows that the vulnerability of young people in a society and the youth-related welfare state characteristics influence how young people participate. The more precarious their transition into adulthood, the less young people participate *within* political organisations like parties and trade unions (Soler-i-Martí and Ferrer-Fons 2015).

## Value Change

Another result of modernisation is the change of socio-economic values. The younger cohorts in advanced industrialised countries have developed more post-materialist atti-

tudes than the older generations that still confront basic survival needs. As Inglehart and Baker (2000, 49) claimed, "Industrialization promotes a shift from traditional to secular-rational values, while the rise of postindustrial society brings a shift toward more trust, tolerance, well-being, and post-materialist values." This generational shift implies that today's young generation is less interested in materialist issues than previous generations because they are able to care about issues beyond basic survival. This means that the divide along class cleavages in politics becomes less important. The division between materialist and post-materialists, however, becomes more relevant and diminishes the economic determinism of political behaviour and thinking (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Flanagan 1987; Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

The assumption of the post-materialist value change is built upon the belief that people are concerned with what they perceive to be most threatening for them. The economic and technological developments during the past century have ensured that people's basic needs are met in the majority of Western democratic societies, and there has been an almost total absence of war. These contextual reasons have enabled individuals to develop an increased need for belonging and self-realisation. The salience of post-materialist issues has increased, while the relevance of the materialist class divide has decreased. Political participation has changed as issue-oriented and elite-challenging forms of participation increase (Inglehart 1977, 3-5). This is by no means a unified development. Cultural differences affect these aspects of social change, but the general trend tends towards post-materialist issues, severely impacting class-based politics and the political organisations grounded in materialist divides (Inglehart and Baker 2000).

Criticism of the value change theory is well established in the scholarship (see Abramson (2011) and McKenzie (2004, 57-73) for an overview). Some scholars contested the differentiation between *materialism* and *post-materialism*, especially on whether aspects like economic needs could be distinguished from issues part of a law and order agenda, such as fighting crime. A wider understanding of materialist versus post-materialist issues included these aspects as materialist (Inglehart and Flanagan 1987, 1305). But the general polarisation between survival versus self-expression, or, put in Inglehart's words, *materialist* versus *post-materialist*, was not questioned. The influence of the religious, political and social context has led to very different situations in different

countries around this general trend (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Both comparative and single case studies revealed this general pattern with contextual specifics (Pettersson and Esmer 2008; Piurko et al. 2011).

In the case of Germany, there has been a general pattern of value change towards post-material values among young people, although young people in western German states are more oriented towards self-expression than young people in the eastern German states (Deutsch et al. 2008). This value change, however has not developed linearly. The youngest generation, meaning those born after 1980, seems to be again increasingly interested in materialist issues, something that has been called a "Silent Counter-Revolution" (Klein 2016; cf. also Roßteutscher 2013) in reference to Inglehart's "Silent Revolution" 1977. What does this "Silent Counter-Revolution" mean for young people's participation in professionalised parties? In this study, young party members likely have very mixed sets of relevant political motivations and that it is possible to analyse the influence of these different value sets on their participation in the party.

Individualisation and value change may have a potentially strong impact on the future membership of former cleavage-based parties. The individualisation of risks and problems impedes collective political action. Collective experiences lose their importance. This lack of collective experiences advances individualised political action. Young people prefer to fight for themselves and seek individual solutions to social problems instead of acting on a collective level (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Such individualised action does not fit well with parties that seek to represent collective group interests. Individualisation undermines collective identities, making it difficult both for individuals to identify with a mass organisation and for the organisations to represent citizens preferences (Andeweg 2003). The shift of values highlights a structural crisis of parties that were grounded in class-based differences. The "high intensity participation" of party membership (Whiteley and Seyd 2002) loses appeal when the main political interests no longer match the cleavages between parties.

A possible future outcome for party membership in professionalised parties that have a class based history is that membership of the younger cohorts might be more difficult to build and harder to maintain. As the scholarship on voting showed, the party systems are no longer "frozen" in the social structure of a society (Franklin 1992),

but this de-alignment between the social situation or class and parties is not total. The social structure still has an impact on party alignment (Evans 2000), although value shifts cause new patterns of cleavages and new alignments (Franklin and Mackie 2009). In this study, the young party membership thus may be more volatile but also more heterogeneous. Because societal trends are not unified across a society, there may be some young people with stronger and some with weaker connections to the traditional social and political milieus. The analysis therefore seeks to explain whether these developments on the societal level can explain differences between young party members regarding their individual attachment of the party and their future in the party.

### 2.3 Professionalisation of Traditional Parties

Societal changes have influenced professionalised political parties to a great extent. After the golden age of mass mobilisation in Western democracies, these former mass member parties now face a massive decline of membership. To compensate for this decline, they have changed the structures of the party organisations. Although not all parties are affected by these developments in the same way and not all organisations have responded in a similar manner, some general trends do apply to political parties as such, especially to the traditional mass membership-based parties that developed along cleavages and professionalised in recent decade. These professionalised parties are at the focus of this research. Developments in political parties have influenced the role of members, how they participate and which roles that are available to them. The following section discusses the main trends and their implications for young party membership, focusing on three aspects: the membership decline, the professionalisation of party structures and the role of the youth organisation. Ultimately, party change impacts the incentives for membership in ambiguous ways. Smaller parties may leave more room for the remaining members to exert influence, but this tendency toward democratisation is countered by centralisation of decision-making at the leadership level.



## Shrinking Parties: The Membership Decline

The decline in party membership is pervasive in Western democracies, both in terms of absolute numbers of party members and in the relation of members to the electorate. During the past three decades, the absolute number of members has been cut by half, and the share of party members within the electorate of established European democracies has shrunk by five percentage points, reaching between almost zero and 10 percent in the past years. There are differences between smaller and larger countries, as smaller countries still have bigger proportions of party members among the electorate, as well as between old and new democracies, but the general trend of decline is valid for almost all countries (Mair and van Biezen 2001; van Biezen, Mair et al. 2012). It is important to note that the term *decline* implies that a "normality" existed in the past. However, this reference point is a historically exceptional case. Much of the comparative data starts only after the middle of the twentieth century when mass membership in parties was growing, covering the heyday of mass member organisations until the 1970s and 1980s. Only compared to that exceptional time are parties on a steady decline (van Haute and Gauja 2015, 3). Yet for today's party leaders facing shrinking numbers and questions about the fate of parties, this reference point is important, and the shrinking can be seen as an important trend.

Another aspect of party membership that is changing is the composition of the remaining members. Traditionally, party members did not represent the electorate well in terms of age, gender, education, religiosity and trade union membership. The latter two aspects occurred because religion and a working class background served as important transmitters of political activism (Panebianco 1988). These ties have dissolved as a result of the societal developments described above. Parties sought to address other parts of society beyond their traditional electorate and weakened their connections with organisations like trade unions (Allern and Bale 2012; Kirchheimer 1965). These weaker ties have not only resulted in shrinking membership numbers, but the smaller group of party members also has become more representative of the electorate. Religion and unionism are no longer as predictive for party membership as in the past. The same applies for education and gender. The age gap in parties,

however, has grown, and older members constitute increasingly larger majorities in parties (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010). The decline in membership has led not only to a quantitative change but also to a qualitative shift, where young people have become the most under-represented group in the remaining membership.

The changes in membership are not the same across all party families and the decrease of members is not monotonic (Kölln 2016; Paulies et al. 2015). New parties emerged beyond traditional class lines. For example, Green parties flourished in the 1970s and 1980s with 'New Politics' on peace and environment protection. They developed out of social movements and challenged the established parties both as they gained new members with more grassroots participation structures and as they became new competitors in elections (Müller-Rommel 2002; Richardson and Rootes 2006). Right-wing populist parties also challenged established parties, as they managed to attract former voters of the catch-all parties and, in some cases, even joined the government, where they became actors on the political floor that strongly influenced the established parties (Mudde 2014; Rydgren 2012). Green and right-wing parties have countered the general trend of membership decline by either creating, stabilising or even enlarging their memberships (van Haute and Gauja 2015, 192f.). The dominant pattern of shrinking applies only to the mass member parties that emerged along class divides with the introduction of universal franchise in the beginning of the twentieth century. Because these parties still play decisive roles in governments in most countries, they are therefore the focus of this study.

The quantitative and qualitative shifts in membership will likely have strong effects on the role of young members in professionalised parties. The erosion of their membership is a challenge to their central idea of representing voters' and members' interests in parliament, and it reduces their potential of gaining votes (Paulies et al. 2015). If the smaller group of remaining members is becoming more heterogeneous in terms of class, religion and gender, it may even be more difficult to find common interests through democratic procedures. In terms of age, the situation is different. When the parties are shrinking and ageing, young members constitute a smaller share of the remaining members and thus exert less influence. At the same time, they are the future of the party and have fewer opponents in potential career plans within the party. This might put them in

a situation where they have more opportunities to reach positions in the party but fewer chances to organise their interests. This will depend on the structural conditions of the party. The structural changes of parties attracted considerable scholarly interest in the recent past. The next section examines the changing structural conditions, focusing on what has been identified as mainstream trends of professionalisation and centralisation of party organisations (Poguntke, Scarrow et al. 2016).

## From Mass Member Parties to Professionalised Organisations

Political parties have responded to the decline in their memberships by expanding their professional apparatus due to scarcer resources (Köln 2015). The following section outlines two ideal type models of party change that explain how political parties have compensated for the decline. The *cartel party thesis* explains how parties alter the relation between parties and the state through their influence on legislative decision-making in order to compensate for a lack of financial resources. The *electoral professional party* concept models how parties change their structures and make use of professionals for the communication between party and electorate in order to compensate for the lack of members. Both models suggest that parties become more professional and centralise their decision-making, which impacts the opportunities that party members have to participate in every day party life and to enter politics professionally.

The *cartel party thesis* argues that parties compensate for their loss of members by turning towards the state. Their ability to influence party legislation in the parliament allows them to make up for their lacking finances with state resources. In order to change legislation, they build a cartel of parties and use this privileged position in the political system (Katz and Mair 1995; Katz and Mair 1996). These *cartel parties* receive state resources through direct public subsidies and indirectly gaining access to public office or state funded public media. As a result, they become distant from society, neglecting their *linkage* function, or the "substantial connection between rulers and ruled" (Lawson 1980, 3), and turn into an agent of the state (Katz and Mair 1996). This cartel pays off for the parties: State resources are easier to access and are more stable than mobilizing members in an individualised society. The organisational structure of the cartel party is tailored to the party leadership. The structure fits the needs of the party in public

office. It requires efficient organisational structures and professional employees at the disposal of the leadership. This reduces the role of grassroots members to supporting professionally-organised campaigns and it diminishes these members' opportunities to develop ownership of their party activities.

The shift of the relations between the party and state also influences the role of party members. A greater closeness to the state and its financial resources entails bureaucratic requirements, turning "party volunteers, in effect, into unpaid state bureaucrats" (Whiteley 2011, 22). In countries with stricter regulations for parties, people express more negative views about parties, and membership declines are stronger with a generational effect: Younger generations are more difficult to recruit in states with higher regulation. Regarding party competition, the cartel thesis argues that parties form a cartel to guarantee that only they have access to scarce resources. Public subsidies replace private member activities, and parties make it more difficult for new contenders to join the stage. Parties downplay the differences they might have, and competition becomes self-referential and technocratic (Katz and Mair 1995; Katz and Mair 2009). This is likely to diminish the differences between parties as such, making it difficult to identify with a certain party as opposed to another party. Such 'cartelisation' of parties reduces the motivation to become a party member because party members work mainly on administrative issues with blurred ideological differences between parties (Whiteley 2011; Whiteley 2014).

The *electoral professional party* concept (Panebianco 1988, 262-274) focuses the replacement of members as multipliers of the party message. In the model, parties compensate for the lack of members by addressing voters directly in election campaigns. The increased availability of mass media makes it easier for party elites to address voters directly by "'marketing' a package of policies suggested by pollster and professional campaign strategists" (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002, 269). This blurs party ideology with mainstream voters' opinions and demands. Parties appeal to the 'opinion electorate' instead of the 'electorate of belonging' (Panebianco 1988, 264), adding to the impression that parties are becoming indistinguishable. To be able to campaign efficiently, the parties centralise their organisation and replace volunteer activity with professionals for efficient campaigning.

Decision-making in electoral professional parties shifts from the mid-level elite to the leadership, as modern mass media requires direct and quick responses. Mid-level activists lose power while the formal rights of rank-and-file members increase through new forms of short-term involvement (Bukow 2013b; Farrell and Webb 2002; Jun 2004; Poguntke and Webb 2005; Scarrow 2014b). For example, individual members gain influence through primaries and voting on single issues. This development strengthens the party leadership because grassroots members are more difficult to mobilise and often less ideological than organised activists (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Ignazi 2014; Russell 2005b). The electoral professional party is a party for the leadership and those aiming at leadership, not for the believers.

Both the *cartel party thesis* and the *electoral professional party* concept depict the change of mass member parties into cadre organisations with little need for an active membership. The empirical reality, however, is more heterogeneous. One important aspect of both concepts is the willingness of parties to recruit new members. Scholars argued that these parties have no incentive to recruit new members, and members are marginalised by professional politicians (Katz and Mair 1995; Whiteley 2011). These arguments are theoretically reasonable but so far lack empirical evidence. There are more incentives for parties to organise members beyond financial reasons (Poguntke 2002). The extreme case of parties that have no reason to attract members, or memberless parties, remains an exception (Mazzoleni and Voerman 2016), and recently found parties have managed to enlarge their membership base (Köln 2016). Additionally, some states regulate party financing in a way that the public subsidies they receive are tied to the amount of membership fees they get as in Germany (Morlok 2013, 255f.). This shows that parties still have a strong incentive to recruit new members even though they are dependent on state financing.

Another characteristic of party change is the dominance of the leadership. However, the power shift from the mid-level elite to the top leadership is empirically contested. A case study on the Swedish Social Democrats challenged this claim, as it found that mid-level activists' power increased at the expense of the party leadership between the 1950s and the 1990s (Loxbo 2013). Other researchers conclude that "today's parties are in some senses also more likely than before to fulfill the requirements of political parties of

participatory and deliberative democracy" (Allern and Pedersen 2007, 85) and that the pattern of change that parties both undergo and bring to their democracy is not uniform within countries (Pedersen 2010) and across countries (Schumacher and Giger 2017). Cross-country studies confirm a great variety of developments in parties across the world but at the same time prove that democratisation methods like "letting members elect the party leader – and increasing membership boosts leadership domination. In other words, the antidotes against leadership domination do not work." (Schumacher and Giger 2017, 1). Thus, party change cannot be seen as a unified development, and there is still a lack of understanding about how young party members experience such parties. Before turning to the individual level of party members, I investigate the special section of parties that is reserved for young people; the youth organisation. As parties usually provide their younger members with a separate inner organisational group for their special interests, this research on young members must take that into consideration.

### The Role of Party Youth Organisations

For the analysis of young party members, the youth branch of parties provides a good opportunity to identify the mechanisms of membership. The entry to the youth organisation is closely connected to joining the party. In many parties, members under a certain age limit automatically become a member of the youth organisation. Youth organisations' activities are likely important for young party members, either because they find their primary social group and complete their activities there or because policies of special interest for young people are discussed there. The sparse literature on party youth organisations suggests that the organisations are important for young party members.

Two strands of literature can be identified within the sparse literature on party youth organisations. One strand analysed the relevance of youth organisation activity for political careers from an ex-post perspective by identifying the former activities of current leaders (Gruber 2009a; Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004; Micus 2005). The second strand focused on the role of youth organisations in engaging young people and encouraging their participation (Kimberlee 2002; Mycock and Tonge 2012; Russell 2005a). Both strands showed that a functioning and influential youth organisation in

a party can help transmit policy issues relevant to young members into the party and prepare young people's future career paths.

The ex-post analyses of members' successful political careers showed the relevance of youth activity for future office-holders. In the analyses, high-ranking officials often had a background in the party youth organisation, suggesting that young leaders accelerate their careers because of their youth organisation activities. Later leaders emphasised the role of networks and how the youth organisation helped them in "getting to know" the norms and habits in the party (Gruber 2009b). Knowing people in the party leadership and being seen as a trustworthy by the leadership young party member seem to increase their career opportunities. Taking into consideration the ageing process in parties, youth organisations likely shrink more quickly than the parties themselves. Examples from Germany and Sweden support that assumption. For example, the youth organisation of the Social Democratic Party in Germany lost about 77% of their members between 1974 and 2005 (Grunden 2006, 129f. cf. also Offe and Fuchs 2002; Rothstein 2002). This means that fewer members were socialised into the party at a young age and thus did not use such networks (Cross and Young 2008a; Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004). This makes the youth organisation as a preparatory space even more important for the remaining fewer members.

The literature on the engagement of young people stressed the accumulative role of youth organisations. They serve an auxiliary function for the party by reaching out to the young electorate and accumulating youth interests as well as young people into the party (Stock 2008). This role has become important as young people's distance to parties has grown. Youth organisations reach into this group of young people on behalf of the party. They help to encourage activities among young members and turn them from silent into active members (Cross and Young 2008a). But these activities might require deviation from party positions in order to incorporate youth interests that outside the party mainstream. Therefore, the youth organisations often serve as radical counterpoints to the party mainstream and its leaders on both youth-related and other issues (Kimberlee 2002). This is not in line with a professionalised party that wants to advertise a clear message of unity to the public. Some of the rare analyses into the realities of party youth organisations showed that their success depends mainly on the

judgement of the party organisation: If the “mother party” perceived the youth and its quantitative potential as important, then the youth organisations had more impact on party policies (Grunden 2006).

The combination of these two aspects means that youth organisations have to serve conflicting needs. It should transmit young people’s interests into an ageing party, which involves conflicts about policies and issues. From the professionalised party point of view, however, there is no need for a ‘critical friend’ of the party. Youth organisations should reach out to a young electorate but not interfere with campaign strategies. Parties seek to limit the role of the youth to only youth specific areas for better control of critical voices, leaving them with little influence on the party’s policies, as the examples of the British Young Labour and the Conservative Future show (Kimberlee 2002; Russell 2005a). The young members themselves might carry conflicting opinions about their role in the youth organisation. If they aspire a future party career, they need to assimilate to the wishes of the professionalised party organisation. To remain the “voice of the youth” within the party, however, they need to express diverging opinions and seek conflicts about policies. In understanding young people’s party membership, their view on the role of the youth organisation is important.

## 2.4 Individuals in Political Parties

Until this point, this chapter discussed general trends on the level of society and organisational influences in parties. But party activity is also very individual. The broad knowledge about young people’s political participation serves as a starting point in understanding the puzzles of young people’s party membership. The two most prominent theoretical strands on political participation as well as party membership are *resource-based explanations* and *incentive-based explanations*. I discuss these two aspects and how they might be interlinked after I examine the relevance of the discussion given the current state of youth political participation in more general terms.

First, it is important to understand that young people on average engage not less but differently in politics. This has important effects for the future of party membership. Today’s younger cohorts are less involved in the traditional political activities of the



representational democracy like voting and membership in parties or unions, but they exert other, non-electoral forms of political influence, such as signing petitions or joining demonstrations (Dalton 2006; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris 2002). The distance between inner-institutional and extra-institutional participation has been deemed the "two worlds" of participation. One is the minority world of young people engaging in the traditional forms of politics while the other is the majority world of protesters outside of the official system. The groups are hardly connected (Busse et al. 2015). Only a small minority of young people is in the traditional channels of politics that offer direct access to power.

The most visible example of the withdrawal of young people from the traditional channels of politics is the decline of party membership. In some countries, such as Germany and Great Britain, the percentage of senior party members aged 60 and older makes up more than 60% of all members, while the share of those under 30 is only between 5 and 10% (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 11; Niedermayer 2014). Since generational effects will likely apply, meaning that the distance between young people and parties will remain as they grow older, the smaller membership levels will have a significant impact on the future of political parties. It is unlikely that those who refrain from becoming a party member at young age will suddenly join the organisation once they are older. Even if the shape of young people's participation is not of a *disengaged youth*, young people's withdrawal from traditional channels of the political system is very likely to decrease the representation of today's young people in the power centres of politics throughout their lifetime (Alwin et al. 1992; Martin 2012a).

If the general trend for young people is to avoid parties, it is even more necessary to understand what causes young party members to join these organisations. Given the fact that parties provide quasi-exclusive access to government positions and heavily influence jobs in public administration, those remaining young people who join parties likely will hold influential positions in the future and to some extent can be seen as "the future of our democracies" (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). During times of shrinking party membership, opportunities to reach influential positions in the party through the means of the party would even increase for those who are still members.

The first step in understanding who these young people are who join parties is asking

what makes them join a party. When social ties are less important, they also become less helpful in explaining the individual decision for or against a particular political action. It is important to examine individual explanations in order to understand political participation and party membership. These explanations are grounded in either the individual resources one has or the cost-benefit calculations one makes based on the incentives party membership might provide. At the end of this section, I discuss how these explanations may be interlinked.

### Resource-based Explanations of Party Membership

The most prominent *resource-based explanation* for political participation is the *socioeconomic standard model*: According to this model, political participation is closely related to the socioeconomic situation of the individual. Those who are more privileged are able to contribute time and effort into their political participation more easily than those without the necessary means. The three decisive aspects are a person's job, education and income. On the individual level, this means that the more time, money and civic skills someone has, the more likely they are to participate in politics (Brady et al. 1995; Harding 1991; Verba and Nie 1976). The three different types of resources are well connected. Better education, which implies better skills and knowledge, usually results in advanced jobs that have higher incomes. Better education might also result in a white-collar job that has more flexibility in terms working hours. There is therefore no surprise that time, money and skills influence individual political participation.

The role of time, money and skills impacts young people in different ways. The influence of time as a resource requires an understanding of time as flexibility or available time. Everyone has a 24 hours in a day but has different amounts of time that are free to use. This flexibility is important in understanding what increases the likelihood of participation. Being in the labour market as opposed to in education restricts time flexibility, and, with it, political participation (Brady et al. 1995, 274). Family requirements, such as having children, also reduce the amount of flexibility a person has. If for example political party events take place in the evening, this might prevent parents from taking part. In Chapter 4 and 6, I examine how time flexibility influences the joining process of young party members.

The impact of education on political participation is complex. Education affects nearly all areas of political behaviour. Education increases civic skills and individual capacities, which are both factors that have a positive influence on political participation (Plutzer 2002; Verba, Schlozman et al. 1995). Education can also be a proxy for other social strata, such as the socio-economic means, and it has a relative effect on participation through influencing status and networks (Persson 2015). Empirical data from Sweden suggests that the effect of education is mediated through an individual's social network position. Political participation increases not due to length of education itself but rather because of the fact that longer educational processes lead to better positioning in social networks. Education provides the individual with relevant contacts and access to people who are more likely to participate politically (Persson 2014). The effect of education is embedded in political contexts, as the following example of voting turnout shows. In some countries, education increases turnout, while in other countries it does not. In Germany, education produces a rather strong gap between those who vote and those who do not vote (Rabuzza 2016).

The effect of social network positioning can explain how education affects the decision to join a party. However, there could also be a reverse effect. Party activity can become a vehicle for those lacking resources in skills to "catch up" with the others, since it might increase social networks and civic skills. In this case, parties would serve as a compensator of social inequality and would lower the influence of the socio-economic status, making political participation the "weapon of the weak" (Verba, Nie and Kim 1978, 14f.). This supportive function of parties would work only for those who are already party members. It would require that those with lower levels of education actually join parties to compensate for education instead of avoiding them. There is little knowledge on the reverse effect, but this study examines whether differences in equipment with these resources make young party members join the party for different reasons.

A final resource-based aspect of party membership refers to the socialisation period of young people. The transmission of political orientations in families is a well-known phenomenon, especially when parents are politicised (Jennings et al. 2009). The formative years for young people are shaped by their experiences in their environment

and the institutions they confront within that environment. Discussions about political issues with family and friends as well as the exposure to political content in school are important indicators for the political interest of young people (Dostie-Goulet 2009; Levinsen and Yndigegn 2015). This means that the relations that the young people have with parties through their social environment could be an important factor in access to the party, making party membership something that can be inherited from family and friends.

### Incentive-based Explanations of Party Membership

The resource-based explanations are important in analysing social differences in political participation and party membership, but they cannot explain the individual motivations someone has that makes them join a party and the reasons for active participation in party activities. *Incentive-based explanations* complement the understanding of young party membership.

The incentive-based approach analyses the individual motives for joining a party based on a cost-benefit calculation of the potential gains and necessary investments. The individual expects certain costs of party membership, such as time and money. In response, the individual expects benefits from membership. Scholars of the traditional rational choice approach argued that the benefit of membership in a group is the chance to influence the group to advance one's own interests (Downs 1957; Olson 1965). The benefit of party membership is thus the ability to influence policies to align more in the member's interest. Such a benefit is usually very small when an individual joins a mass member organisation. Or, as Olson (1965, 53) stated: "When the number of participants is large, the typical participant will know that his own efforts will probably not make much difference to the outcome, and that he will be affected by the meeting's decision in much the same way no matter how much or how little effort he puts into studying the issues." This problem has been labeled as the "paradox of participation" (Strom 1975).

Newer approaches towards examining incentives distinguish between the different types of incentives. The *general incentives model* distinguishes between individual incentives that benefit the individual member and collective incentives that have a positive

effect on a wider group or serve normative needs. Both individual and collective benefits are important in understanding the motives of party membership. Besides the opportunity to change political decisions for one's own benefit, it is also important for an individual to contribute to an idea or change the situation for a particular group as such (Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994). Another distinction of incentives is between those related to the outcome of participation and those related to the process itself (Seyd and Whiteley 1992, 60). Collective outcome incentives occur when the result of a decision-making process is seen as positive, e.g. when a legislation improved. Individual outcome incentives could be a job opportunity in the party or better networks for a professional career outside of politics. Process incentives are related to the experiences of participation, such as the experience of being part of a group that performs a certain action or getting to know people and thus expanding social networks (Seyd and Whiteley 1992, 60; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994, 11). This distinction between the benefits of the results of being a party member and of the processes of membership helps in understanding differences in joining motivations and also might explain differences in the activity levels of party members.

How does this relate to young people? Young people likely have a different set of motivations for party membership due to their life stage. They are still forming their political orientation and use their family and friends to develop a political opinion (Dostie-Goulet 2009; Levinsen and Yndigegn 2015). They are also preparing for the labour market and making decisions about their future educational and professional paths. In this situation, many individual incentives might influence personal careers. Party membership may help a young person gain access to jobs in the public sector or the government (Bruter and Harrison 2009b, 1263). Membership could also provide a space for young people studying subjects like political science where they can relate their education to the real world of politics (Dominguez et al. 2016). These reasons suggest that incentives for young party members are potentially different from the average party member.

The general incentives theory required adjustment to fit young party members and take into account the life stage of youth. **bruterharrison2009** identified three types of young members, with each of type having a predominant motivation for activism.

The *social-minded members* use their party activity mainly to look for others who share their views. They engage only occasionally if it fits into their social needs, have the least ambitions and are most critical towards their party. They have the least concern for policy-seeking priorities of the party leadership. The *moral-minded members* take party activism as their moral duty. They are motivated by the goal to change society and have a high commitment to their party. Even though they are similar to social-minded members in giving a lot of importance to ideology, they are more pragmatic regarding compromises for electoral success. *Professional-minded members* emphasise their individual ambitions. They tend to invest a lot of time in their activity, but their ideological orientation is rather weak. They are most supportive of office-seeking activities of the party (Bruter and Harrison 2009a; Bruter and Harrison 2009b, 1274f.). In the study, the large share of moral-minded members confirmed that also among young party members, moral and ideological convictions are the most important reasons to join a party. But a significant minority among the young party members seeks individual advantages from their party. They are the ones that are least critical of the party and invest the most time in activities. They will likely build their networks and become "tomorrow's leaders" (Bruter and Harrison 2009b).

Little is still known about how these diverse sets of motivations translate into party activity. The experiences of young people in parties are not only positive. In Bruter and Harrison (2009), young members described their relationship to elder party members as difficult and conflictual, and they reported feeling rejected, especially when introducing new ideas they brought in or running for office (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 230-234). This situation could have an important effect on the future composition of the party: Those who were primarily motivated by personal incentives may handle these frustrations in a better way, while others could feel alienated and leave the party. The differing involvement of the three groups described above suggests that there is good reason to expect differing transitions towards becoming party activists. The professional-minded members in the study were likely to "be more efficacious than the rest, revealing a sense of power within the party organisation, pledge their allegiance to the party by being more positive about it than other members, and consider politics to be a profession" (Bruter and Harrison 2009b, 1279). This indicates that understanding the heterogeneity

of the young party members is key in determining what their potential future looks like and, as a result, who will become the driving forces of parties in the future.

This study seeks to understand how these individual-level explanations of resources and incentives are connected. Researchers of political participation have been aware that a pure rational action-based model of participation has shortcomings and that individual resources might explain some of these shortcomings (Whiteley and Seyd 1996). Others argued that motivations and resources are difficult to distinguish, taking the example of political interest (Goerres 2009, 28f.). In this study, resources likely have the potential to influence incentives. An example illustrates this. If a young member joined a party based on well-founded information about the party structure from her parents who are party activists, she has a certain idea about what to expect from being a party member. Someone with a rather theoretical knowledge about the party garnered from civic education classes likely has other expectations and thinks differently about what the party could offer him. This small example shows that resources very likely influence the incentives, demonstrating that the connection between both requires further examination.

## Conclusions

This chapter developed the analytical framework for the following analysis. Developments on the societal level, the party organisational level and the individual level influence this study's research questions. To understand why young people today join an established political party and how they experience party activity and envision their future in the party, it is imperative to integrate these three levels into one framework. Figure 2.1 sketches this framework and its connection to the empirical part of this work.

The developments on the societal level indicate that young people are distinct from previous generations in how they experience youth and the transition into adulthood. They are likely to have more options in relevant aspects of their lives, such as in choosing an occupation, building a family and settling down, as they are less bound by social ties. As the paths from youth into adulthood become more individualised, they will also be more heterogeneous. Young people probably also have political priorities and

preferences that are different from their parents and grandparents, which likely differ across the generation of young people as well. I include these aspects that have been summarised above as *individualisation* and *value change* in this analysis by measuring the political preferences and milieu ties of young party members. They are analysed based on their impact on the motivations to become a party member and on the future perspectives of the young party members.

On the party organisation level, parties respond to the ongoing membership decline with the tendency to professionalise their structures and centralise their decision-making processes. The role for members in these professionalised parties is different from the past. Despite a great heterogeneity of developments across party families and countries, professionalised parties have two main benefits to offer their members that are different from older forms of party involvement: involvement in professionally organised campaigns as supporters and opportunities for a few members to develop skills and prepare for career paths towards the leadership positions of these parties. I integrate the impact of *party change* into the analysis in two ways. I first analyse if the impact of party change as laid out by the two ideal types of party change, the *cartel party* and the *electoral professional party*, are relevant to young activists and, if so, in what way. Second, I include measurements in the analysis that will help grasp the realisation of potential incentives as perceived by the young party members.

On the individual level, both *resources* and *incentives* explain why someone joins a party. Some explanations, such as the general incentive model (Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994) have been reevaluated to match the specific circumstances of young people and cover life cycle effects like career prospects that are more prevalent for young members. This demonstrated that potential benefits like a career through the party are appealing to a relevant group of young partisans (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). Resource-based explanations also have been adopted to fit the special life stage of young people. Their belief in political efficacy in the context of a party organisation as well as parental closeness to parties are important in understanding why young people join parties today (Cross and Young 2008b). None of these approaches, however, analysed the context for the party membership of young people in terms of its connection to societal- and party-level developments. In other words,



they did not incorporate the fact that young people today are not the same as young people a generation ago or the changes that political parties have experienced in the past decades.

The decline of membership not only in political parties but also in trade unions and other former membership-based organisations has caused scholars to argue that parties will attract mainly those that "have an instrumental view of political parties and view them first and foremost as a career vehicle" in the future (van Biezen and Poguntke 2014, 214). Previous research on young party members in different European parties showed that there is only a minority of young members who primarily seek to fulfill own career ambitions through their party membership, but this minority is the most active and involved group (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). But is party membership indeed becoming "a profession rather than a vocation that is [also] inspired by a commitment to a cause" as van Biezen and Poguntke (2014, 214) suggest?

I argue that the picture is more diverse. It is reasonable to believe that the reasons for joining a party are not either resource-based or incentive-based; instead, there should be a combination of these two influencing logics. The scholarship on the motives of young party members indicates that parties have differentiated groups of young party members. They are probably not only different in their motivations but also regarding what they expect from the party for their future. Will they go up, stay where they are or leave? Furthermore, different aspects that influence party membership may work differently on each member, depending on what motivations they have. If they are strongly motivated ideologically, they may dislike some of the mechanisms of a professionalised party more than those who have stronger career ambitions. Societal developments may also play a role here. Since milieus ties of the young members may be different, this could influence who might think of leaving the party after being disappointed and possibly join another party or a pressure group and who will handle frustration better because belonging to the party has always been a family tradition. The empirical part of this study seeks to disentangle these complex relationships from the perspective of young party members themselves.

## Chapter 3

# Research Strategy and Data Base

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology and the data for the following analysis. It elaborates the rationale for the selection of the empirical case, the data collection and the chosen methods of data analysis. It also includes a first uni- and bivariate analysis of the collected data to provide basic insights about the data set.

### 3.1 Case Selection: Young Members in the SPD

Young individual party members constitute the scope of the following analysis. The investigation is based on individual data, and the unit of analysis is the individual young party member. The working definition of "young" for this research includes people younger than 36 years of age. This arbitrary age limit has two justifications. First, education, work entry and establishing a family and settling down began to occur later in the last decades. The age of 36 years is also able to encompass longer educational processes. Second, this age is the limit for membership in the youth organisation of the SPD. The age of 36 years thus signifies what the party considers to be young and in need of a special group within the party. From the perspective of the organisation, young party members up to 36 years old are developing political interests and deciding whether to continue their participation in the party. In other words, the party sees these young members as distinct from other members.

The rationale for selecting young party members in the SPD in Germany is important in understanding the scope of the findings in this study. The unit of analysis, the

young party member, is embedded into a certain context. This context is a political party within a country's party system. The party itself is influenced by its systemic, institutional and social environments as well as by its ideology and history (Harmel and Janda 1994). Similarly, the party system shapes the party and vice versa. The criteria for selecting a party were that it should be a dominant party within a party system and that its membership should have aged significantly in recent decades. The youth organisation of the party should also be a full part of the party, all youth organisation members should be party members and party members under a certain age should be members of the youth organisation. These criteria provide the background for the case selection.

Elements of case selection theory help illuminate why I chose young members in the SPD and what implications this choice has for this study. Based on the Gerring's typology (2007, 88f.), the SPD is a *influential case*. An influential case features configurations of essential aspects that may be able to challenge a general assumption. The SPD is an influential case of an ageing catch-all party. Because of its huge loss of members in the past three decades, especially among its share of young members, the SPD seems to resemble the ideal type of a former mass member party that is on its descent (D'Antonio and Munimus 2009; Niedermayer 2015). At the same time, the party regularly reaffirms that its main aim is to recover from previous losses in membership. The organisation has responded rather randomly with small structural reforms to show off new forms of involvement for members, all the while professionalising and centralising its decision-making processes (Jun 2004; Mjelde 2013; Tetz 2012). The party also has not redefined itself using structural reforms or even new branding campaigns, as the Labour Party in Israel or New Labour in the UK have done (Rahat and Hazan 2013; Rahat and Kenig 2015; Russell 2005b). Within the party system, there have been only minor changes that can be seen as a reaction to the downfall of this catch-all party (Poguntke 2014; Saalfeld 2002). Furthermore, no new parties that serve as representatives of the young generation and introduce new forms of politics have been established in Germany, as was recently the case in Greece and Spain with anti-austerity parties (Kennedy 2014; Kennedy 2015; Teperoglou and Tsatsanis 2014) or in Iceland with the Pirate Party, which tripled its vote share at the expense of the established parties with

new media approaches and anti-establishment campaigns (Henley 2016). The only new emerging party in Germany that is labeled as a "young party" (Bieber 2012; Niedermayer 2013), the Pirate Party, is on a sharp decline after less than one legislative period. One of its most prominent representatives even moved to the Social Democrats after the dissolution of the Pirate Party became evident during their first term in parliament (ZeitOnline 2016). The SPD is following a general trend of declining, but its response has been rather moderate, if almost non-existent. Furthermore, the changes that the SPD in Germany faces are not even close to those occurring to other parties and party systems in the Western World.

The SPD is one of two German catch-all parties, having been in and out of the government coalition between the 1960s and 2005. Since 2005, it has been either in the opposition or the smaller party in a so-called "grand coalition" with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The party has lost a significant share of members in the past decades and, as a response, has instituted reforms, such as replacing party bureaucrats with professional staff that supports the party leadership and shifting decision-making to the leadership level (Grabow 2000; Hertner 2015; Padgett 2001). Communication through mass media has become more important, and politicians focus more on using the media to reach constituents (Jun 2004; Jun 2011). The SPD is also situated in the German context, in which parties are heavily based on public subsidies and feature a comparably strong apparatus of professional staff (Poguntke, Scarrow et al. 2016, 4-7). Despite these developments, the party regularly reaffirms its commitment to mass membership (Mjelde 2013) and it has begun to experiment with direct member involvement (Bukow 2013b; Detterbeck 2008; Detterbeck 2013). The influence of rank-and-file members increased only recently. In 2013, the national leadership asked members to vote on the decision about joining the coalition with the CDU. In the fall of 2015, the state party section in Berlin called a members' vote on the election program for the upcoming state elections. A year before, it held the first primaries to select the successor of the city major. Despite these efforts at involving rank-and-file members, the SPD is a typical former mass member party that is ageing and shrinking and, in response, has centralised its structures only recently and reluctantly. In this study, young members face a party that is affected by the general trend of party change but is situated within

a party system that lacks alternatives.

The membership decline in the SPD during the past decades disproportionately affected the share of young members. According to data from the SPD party headquarters, there were 442,814 members in 2015, which means that the party has lost more than half of its size since 1990 where it had a membership of almost a million. The share of members under 36 years old is currently around 10% (Niedermayer 2016a, 2,21). This is a result of 40 years of steady decline among young members in the party and marks a significant change from the party's heyday in the 1970s, when the party could count around 300,000 young members, almost a third of the then one million members (Grunden 2006, 130; Walter-Rogg 2013, 250). Even though the absolute number of new members is steadily decreasing, the SPD, along with the leftist party Die Linke, are the only German parties where the majority of new members annually joining the party are young people under 36 years of age. For example, around 5,000 young people joined the party in 2015 (Niedermayer 2016a, 30ff.). The party is still able to attract some young people but in significantly less numbers compared to the past.

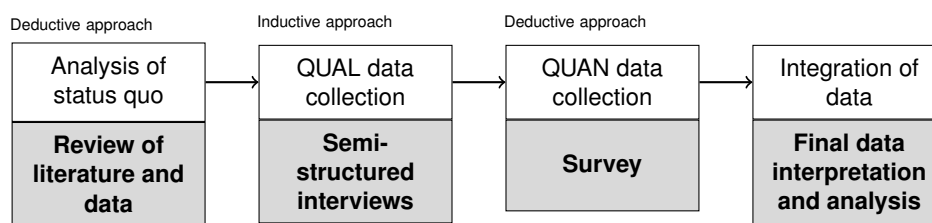
Being a party of the social democratic party family, the SPD is shaped both by its workers' movement heritage and the "transformation of the European Social Democracy" (Kitschelt 1994), in which many social democratic parties in Europe adopted the (in)famous "Third Way" (Giddens (1998) 2013) that called for the merger of social policies and market liberalism. These developments changed not only the politics of the party but also the party leadership, with the working class leaders of the post-World War II generation replaced by the current leadership of "new managers" (Reinhardt 2011). This shift from a leftist working class party towards a centre party is reflected in the current membership base, even though historic characteristics are still visible. Members from its traditional base still play a role in the SPD, but their impact is vanishing as the membership of the party becomes more socioeconomically similar (Biehl 2005; Biehl 2014). In that sense, the SPD is a party that has historic roots in the social struggle of the working class but recently has assimilated into the centre- and middle class-oriented mainstream. The young members in this study likely demonstrate this development.

The case of the SPD allows for the analysis of young party members who belong

to a party that has moderately changed throughout the past decades yet remains a membership-based party in a relatively unchanged party system. This study focuses on young members who most likely have weaker ties with the workers' movement as the generations before, but they may still somehow relate to its ideological heritage. Tracing the results of these changes among the young party members in the SPD presents some general conclusions for the understanding of the impact of party change on party members.

## 3.2 Research Methodology

The research methodology uses a mixed methods strategy. It follows a *sequential explorative research strategy* with an initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis (Creswell 2003, 213-219). Figure 3.1 illustrates the research strategy. Its purpose is *developmental* (Clark and Creswell 2008, 119-131; Greene 2007, 100-104), as it seeks to investigate into an area of research that has received a lot of attention in general but is still lacking specific perspectives, which in this case is the perspective of the young party members. This work seeks to fill in that gap by combining in-depth insights into the experiences of young party members who are party activists and large-scale data from a sample of the full population of young party members.



**Figure 3.1: Research Strategy:** Model of the sequential exploratory analysis.

The Chapters 4 and 5 are based on data from semi-structured interviews with young party activists. Young party activists form a group within the young party members that goes beyond the point of joining a party and invests more time in party activities. The interviews with the activists sought to open the research field and get insights into mechanisms of joining and experiencing the party. They also served as a basis to generate hypotheses that could be tested against the larger group of all young party

members in the second step. The first part of the interview study analyses one basic question: *What brought you here?* It uses incentive- and resource-based strategies to investigate the reasons why young members join the party. The second part goes further and analyses their experiences in being a party activist. Based on the party change concepts of the cartel party thesis and electoral professional party concept, the narrated experiences of the young activists are analysed to identify their possible implications.

Chapters 6 and 7 draw upon a data set from an online survey of all young SPD members (N=4006). The two chapters incorporate the results from the interview analysis in order to test the findings against the larger group of young party members, but the chapters also develop further the insights garnered from the interviews. Chapter 6 develops a typology of young party members based on their motivations. This approach seeks to answer if there are different *groups* of young party members and, if so, how those groups can be characterised. The analysis also connects young party members' resources with their motivations, bringing together the two most influential theoretical concepts of party membership. Chapter 7 investigates who among the young party members will potentially seek a career in the party and who will potentially leave it. The chapter is based the experiences of young activists during the interviews. In this chapter, I try to understand what causes different pathways of membership and how parties are able to influence their young members' party related future.

The research design combines qualitative and quantitative methods to address exploratory and confirmatory questions (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). Focusing on only party activists in the interviews ensured that they contain as much information as possible about normal day-by-day experiences within the party, as these activists likely have sound experiences in the party and are regularly exposed to party activities. The survey data extends the perspective of the highly active elite to a representative sample of all young party members in order to not only test the results of the interview inquiry but also uncover differences between the active core group within the party and other members. The latter is especially important in determining if there are systematic differences between the more and less active party members. While active party members can be considered to be very engaged in their party, the so called "silent" members have been characterised as something between closely-connected activists and non-members

(Heidar and Saglie 2003a, 762). Combining both data sources adds to what we know about the changing face of professionalised parties from the unique view of young party members. The next sections elaborate the data collection strategies of the interview data and the survey data.

### Interviews with Young Party Activists

The interviews were conducted with 10 young party activists between November 2012 and January 2013. The interview period was chosen so as not to interfere with a national election campaign. It also covers a period when the SPD was in opposition to the government on the national level. The participants were recruited by email with the help of the youth office of the party headquarters in Berlin. Further interviewees were recruited via Facebook posts and Twitter, as well as using snowball sampling through other interview partners. The interview partners were informed that the interview data would be used for academic purposes and that the research results would be published. In order to ensure the most diverse sample for the interviews, I selected ten of the volunteers based on their duration of membership, gender, and regional origin. All interview partners considered themselves to be active members and all held an elected position in a working group, served in local leadership or were delegates to the National Congress either for the youth organisation or for the party. The interview partners included 5 men and 4 women, while 1 did not specify gender. The educational level of the interview partners was high: five of them had an academic degree, two had a vocational training degree and three had a high school degree. It was not possible to find interview partners with lower educational levels. Five of the activists were working, four were university students and one was a student in the vocational training sector. They were between 20 and 32 years old and had been SPD members between one and nine years. For each interview partner, a short summary is given covering basic demographic information and characteristics of the main categories of analysis (Overview in Appendix: Table A.1 and A.2).

The interviews were conducted in German. They lasted between 20 to 90 minutes, depending on how much the interview partner had to say. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way with an open narrative phase in the beginning, where the



interview partners discussed how they ended up as a party member. This open approach avoided the problem in which the interview partners may have responded to the direct question of *why* they became a party member by telling very streamlined and prepared story about their motivation. This phase was followed by further questions covering the areas of motivation, experiences, the relation between the youth organisation and the party organisation. The interviewees were also asked about how they thought about their future in the party. The interviews finished with an open question about anything that the interview partner thought was missing throughout the interview (Cf. Interview guideline in Appendix, A.3). All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The interviews were made anonymous.. All interview partners received a data privacy statement from the interviewer and agreed to a written statement that the interview data could be used for academic purpose.

The interview data was analysed using qualitative content analysis methodology. This systematic approach of summarizing, forming inductive categories, explicating and structuring allows for a structured and pragmatic handling of the material. Qualitative content analysis is a methodology that *reduces* the material to the core research question (Schreier 2012, 80). For the analysis, units of analysis are coded from the material into a coding frame. The unit of coding is a passage of meaning. The interview setting implies that there are not always full sentences in the transcript. Each code includes as much information as necessary to understand the meaning of the passage. As a result, the coded parts are of very varying length, and counting the coded units does not make sense. The coding frame for this analysis was developed in a combined deductive-inductive technique (Schreier 2012, 89f.).

The broad approach and the use of narratives in the interviews required a reduction of the material back to the relevant research questions. The current state of research on party organisations and party membership allowed for a deductive development of the main coding scheme. The coding scheme includes five main categories in two research parts. All relevant parts of the interviews were coded into these main categories. The open approach of a qualitative content analysis ensures that a preliminary set of subcategories can be complemented inductively throughout the analysis. This means that subcategories are added to the preliminary coding frame if aspects arise in the

| <i>Main category</i>                      | <i>Theoretical concept</i>   |
|---|--|
| Part 1: Joining the party (Chapter 4)     |  |
| Resources                                 | Resource-based explanations of political participation, especially the socio-economic standard model, and their implications for party membership (Brady et al. 1995; Henn and Foard 2013).  |
| Incentives                                | The logic of collective action (Olson 1965; Whiteley 1995), incentive-based explanations of party membership (Seyd and Whiteley 2002; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994) and their implications for young party members (Bruter and Harrison 2009a).    |
| Part 2: Activism in the party (Chapter 5) |  |
| Party image of young party members        | The tendency of ageing in party organisations and the attitudes of a younger generation towards parties and other forms of political activity (Busse et al. 2015; Cross and Young 2008b; Dalton 2008; García Albacete 2014; Henn, Weinstein et al. 2005) |
| Party change                              | Electoral professional party concept and cartel party thesis (Katz and Mair 1994; Katz and Mair 1995; Panebianco 1988)   |
| Youth organisation                        | Role of party youth organisation as preparation for party leadership (Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004) and youth organisations as linkage between parties and youth electorate (Berry 2008; Lamb 2003)   |

**Table 3.1: The main categories of the coding scheme** for the qualitative content analysis of the interview data. Overview over the theory-driven main categories of the coding scheme. For the full coding scheme including all guiding question see Appendix, A.2.

data that were not derived theoretically (Elo et al. 2014; Schreier 2012, 89f. Schreier 2014). Following such an iterative process, the interview material in the main categories was grouped into subcategories that were initially developed deductively based on theoretical considerations. The categories were later revised inductively based on the data collected. The coding process was organised as follows: A trial coding to test the coding frame was applied to three interviews. This trial coding was done again on the same material four weeks later to assure the consistency of the categories, following the recommendation in Schreier (2012, 146). Afterwards, the subcategories were revised to fit the need of the material and to increase consistency. The data from the three

interviews was recoded again into this coding frame. Following that, the full data was coded into the coding frame and minor adjustments of the subcategories were made to fit the data. After the full coding scheme was developed, all material was coded again into the coding frame after two weeks to check for consistency. The main categories and the corresponding theoretical foundation are laid out in table 3.1. The subcategories and the guiding questions are elaborated in the respective chapters (see Appendix, A.2. for the full coding frame).

The interview data provides the basis for an in-depth analysis of the perspective of young party activists on the process of joining a party and their experiences of day-by-day party activities. The analysis allows for a better understanding of the phenomena from this particular view of highly involved individuals, and it adds a perspective to the study of political parties that is regularly underexposed.

### Online Survey of Young Party Members

Chapters 6 and 7 of this study are based on data from a large-scale online survey among young members under 36 years in the SPD. The survey was developed for the purpose of this research using the social survey platform `soscisurvey.de`. The questionnaire included basic socio-demographic items as well as questions regarding aspects that pre-date the young members' joining of the party, their joining process, current political activities and interests, their perception of the party and their future perspectives. The survey was a total of 12 pages in length. A detailed outline of the six different parts of the questionnaire are listed in Table 3.2.

The questionnaire was pretested on a subgroup of the population with extensive feedback opportunities (N=25). This subgroup consisted of a sample among all interview partners and a group of 15 further members of young party members. Afterwards, the questionnaire was revised according to the feedback. Revisions were mainly related to the formulation of questions, answer opportunities, and the layout of the questionnaire. The survey was available online from March 11th to April 14th, 2015 via a direct link that included a password. The link was sent out via email along with information from the communication department at party headquarters encouraging members to participate in the survey. Additionally, a lottery was announced, offering five online vouchers

as a reward for participation. 42,080 members were on the full email list. The total return rate of finished surveys was 9.8% (4129 cases). Basic data cleaning was done using degrade points for missing values and high speed responses.<sup>1</sup>.

The sample was tested against the full population and can be considered to be representative in terms of gender and regional distribution (federal state level).. The age distribution in the sample is a bit different from the population regarding the group of members who younger than 36 years old. They are statistically significantly underrepresented since they make up 7% of the population and 0.2% of the sample. Due to the size and the character of the affected group, no weights are applied in the analysis. The share of the group in the population is rather small, so the bias has only minor effects, if at all, on the analysis. Additionally, a weighting strategy builds on the assumption that the group in the sample is representative of the group in the population. This is a strong assumption and cannot be supported because time (flexibility) and how much someone perceives themselves to be part of the "youth" might influence participation in the survey (for selection and weighting bias in online surveys cf. Blasius and Brandt (2010, 8-9) and Faas and Schoen (2006)).

Online surveys have been criticised for their small response rates and minimal representativeness (Blasius and Brandt 2009; Maurer and Jandura 2009; Selm and Jankowski 2006). The main argument is that access to and familiarity with the Internet is unequally distributed among heterogeneous populations. Thus, the chance to participate in online surveys is unequally distributed as well, creating biased samples. However, this problem does not apply to smaller homogeneous groups that can be expected to have similar access to the Internet and possess known email addresses (Maurer and Jandura 2009, 65f.). The population of young party members of the SPD in Germany should be such an unproblematic group. They are most likely to have similar access to the Internet, and since young people have been shown to participate in online surveys more frequently than older people, they might even be more willing to participate in a web survey compared to a print version (Berrens et al. 2003; Faas 2003; Selm and Jankowski

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<sup>1</sup>The selection used the implemented quality indicators of soscisurvey. It is based on the individual time needed for the questionnaire compared to the median time used by all respondents. See Appendix A.6 for an elaboration of the handling of data. The resulting net return rate is 9.5% (N=4006). The strategy for replacing missing data is summarised in table A.3. An overview of all frequencies including missing data for each variable is provided in table A.7.

| <i>Main category</i>              | <i>Content</i>   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Socio-demography                  | Questions about age, living situation, education and the socioeconomic background of the family.   |
| Political interest and activities | Questions about interest in politics, the importance of different political issue areas and political activities in general.                                 |
| Party membership                  | Questions regarding the duration of membership and the closeness of the membership (family relations, thinking about leaving, voting for different parties). |
| Joining the party                 | Questions regarding the process of joining the party, such as political activity prior to membership and reasons for joining.                                |
| Party activities                  | Questions regarding the type and extent of activities in the party, official positions and other related political actions.                                  |
| Perspective on the party          | Questions regarding perceptions of influence in the party, its political priorities and future perspective on party membership.                              |

**Table 3.2: The categories of the survey questionnaire** for the online survey (see Appendix, A.5 for the full questionnaire).

2006). Furthermore, the full population of this survey was contacted using their individual email addresses. The likelihood to participate in an online survey should not be biased within our population.

Another pitfall of online surveys is that they are vulnerable to self-selection. Again, the population in this analysis is likely to be more engaged compared to other groups and should have a basic interest in discussing their party. However, the self-selection bias is important when analysing the results of this survey. The advantage of getting the support of the party headquarters when sending out the questionnaire might have the downside that those party members who are already distanced to the party leadership or the party in general are less likely to participate. Taking that into consideration, it is still reasonable to use an online survey for this research

The online platform `soscisurvey.de` provides the data in different formats. This analysis uses the data in the Stata format. The analysis was done using the software package R<sup>2</sup>. The following analysis uses advanced statistical techniques. In Chapter

<sup>2</sup>R: A language and environment for statistical computing. [www.r-project.org](http://www.r-project.org).

6, a latent class model is developed to identify motivational groups among the young party members and relate these groups with individual resources. In Chapter 7, the young party members' perspectives of the future are analysed in terms of what influences those planning a future career in the party and those considering leaving the party. This analysis is based on logistic regression techniques. The models and procedures are elaborated further in the respective chapters. The following section gives an overview of the important characteristics of the empirical base that this study uses and contextualises the characteristics into the broader knowledge about young people's political participation and about German party members and SPD members in general.

### 3.3 The Young SPD Members in Context

The data set gives insights into the world of young SPD members. To be able to discuss the implications of the findings in the following chapters, it is critical to understand who these young members are and where they are located in the realm of political participation of young people in general as well as how their characteristics relate to all members of the SPD. This section introduces the sample with some basic analysis and sets it into the context of what is known about young people's political participation in broad terms as well as about party members in Germany.

#### Young Party Membership in Context

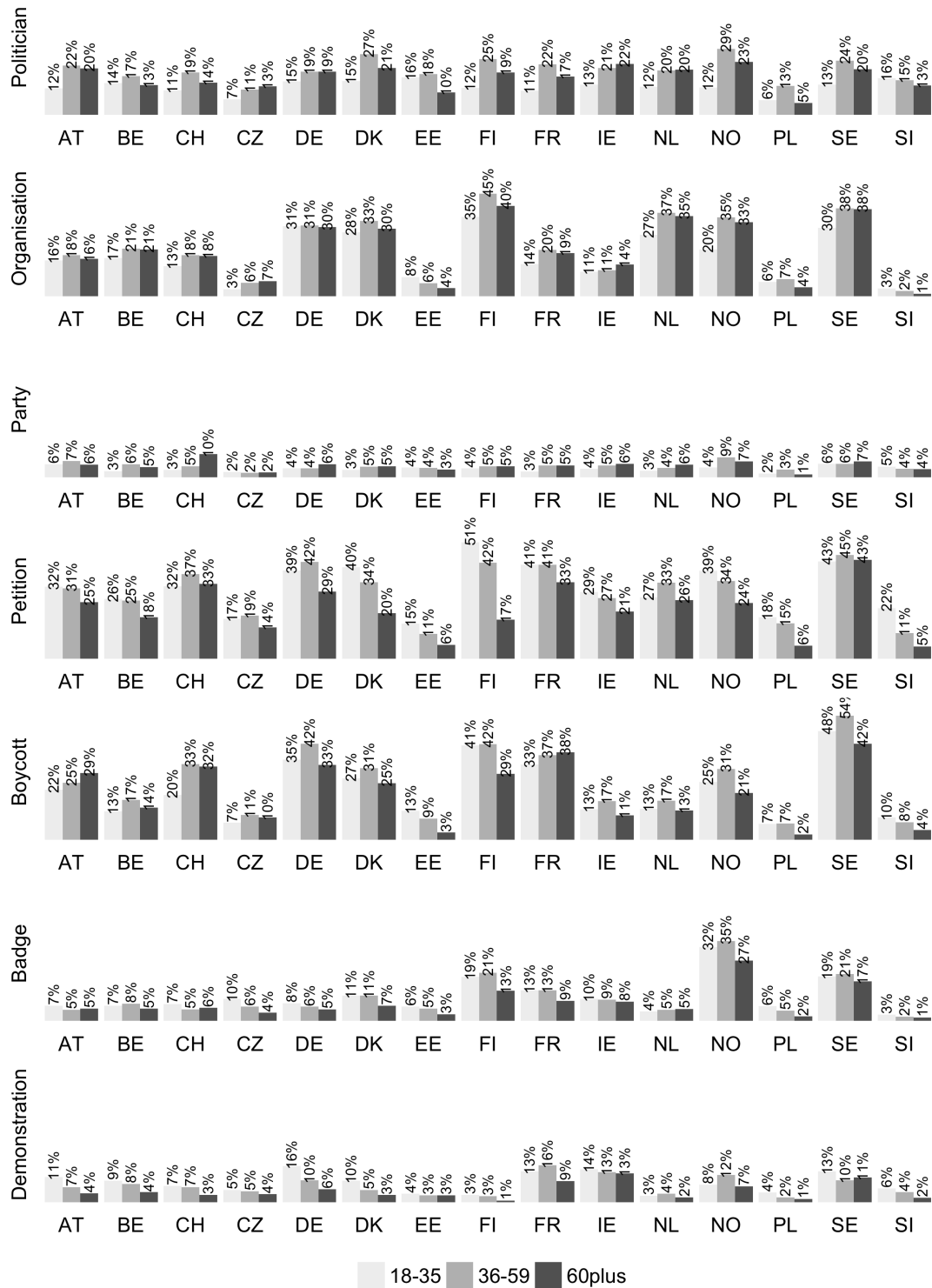
The decline of party membership is an oft-cited general trend in the Western world of political parties. This decline is obvious, although the developments are heterogeneous in different countries and among different parties (van Biezen, Mair et al. 2012; van Biezen and Poguntke 2014). The similarities between the self-reported data of parties on their own membership (van Biezen, Mair et al. 2012; van Biezen and Poguntke 2014) and mass survey data like the European Social Survey (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Whiteley 2011) show that this trend of decline is generally stable during the recent past. The latter type of data also allows for age differentiation on party membership and a contextualisation of German young people within a wider European context.

The data on political participation shows that party membership is a minority form

of political activity. There is little difference between young people and the rest of society. Figure 3.2 shows the share of people that participate in different forms of political activity in different European countries by age groups. These numbers show a general trend of young people being less engaged in forms of political participation that relate to official representative politics, such as contacting politicians and working in organisations and in parties. Despite country differences, informal action, especially demonstrating and wearing a badge, is more popular than among older populations. As a result of the small share of party members in general, the difference between old and young seems almost negligible. However, upon looking deeper into the differences within political parties, the small differences yield important age relations within party organisations, which over-represent older parts of society among their members in most European countries (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010, 830).

Germany is among the majority of states where the overrepresentation of the older people in parties increased in the past decades. Based on what parties report, annual overviews of the membership developments show that the share of young members in all parties is below their share in society, but there are important differences among the party families. The smaller parties, especially the Green Party, are leaning less towards an ageing membership than the two traditional catch-all parties, SPD and CDU (Niedermayer 2016b, 426f.). However, the SPD still manages to attract new young members at reasonable numbers, more than other parties in Germany (Niedermayer 2016a, 30ff.).

The sample of SPD members examined in this work is situated within this context. Party membership is a minority activity within the arena of political participation across Europe, and young party members are among the very few who have committed themselves to this "high-intensity participation" (Whiteley and Seyd 2002). The young party members in the SPD belong to a traditional mass member party that is typical in its general development of decreasing membership and the centralisation and professionalising of its structures, all the while still committing itself to mass membership. The party lost many members in the past, but it still has an influx of young members, more than many of the other parties in the country. Analysing young SPD members offers insights into a case that is not extreme, as a high number of young people are



**Figure 3.2: Political participation in Europe across age groups.** Share of "Yes" to the questions "During the last 12 months, have you done any of the following?" have you "contacted a politician, government or local government official?" (*Politician*), "worked in a political party or action group?" (*Party*), "worked in another organisation or association?" (*Organisation*), "worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker?" (*Badge*), "signed a petition?" (*Petition*), "taken part in a lawful public demonstration?" (*Demonstration*), "boycotted certain products?" (*Boycott*). Countries according to ESS country code. Data source: ESS 7.2 (2014), own calculations.



still joining the SPD, but is still typical of an ageing and shrinking catch-all party.

The following section digs deeper into the case of young party members and elaborates how this group looks like based on the information gleaned from the survey sample and compared with the other literature about young members party members. The lack of in-depth data on party membership unfortunately allows for only minor comparisons between the sample and other party membership data. Comparisons can be made where it is possible by using the publication of the latest German Party Members Study (Spier et al. 2011) and the annually provided data from the party headquarters (Niedermayer 2016a).

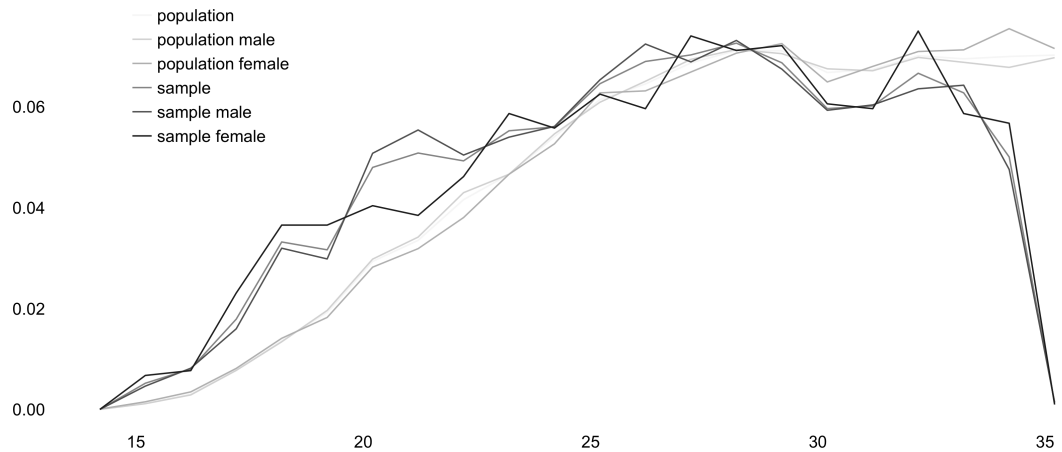
### Age and Composition of the Young Members

The party members in the sample were between 15 and 36 years old. The mean age was 26.31 years with no significant differences between men and women (t test: p-value 0.71). The sample differs from the full population in that it over-represents younger members and underrepresents those aged 35 years (See Figure 3.3). This might be a result of declining interest or less time due to a higher involvement in working life. Since there is no available data regarding the labour market involvement of the population, it is impossible to test this assumption. Due to the small number of affected cases, this minimal bias can be ignored. In terms of gender, 27% of the sample were women. This number is slightly less than in the data set of all members under 36 years provided by the party to this study (28.1%) and less than the 32% of women that is reported for the whole party in 2015 (Niedermayer 2016b, 420). The numbers reflect the tendency of women to join the party a bit later than men. The share of women among the young party members is smaller than it should be for an equal representation. This is in line with what is generally known about party members in all of the German parties (Klein 2011, 43).

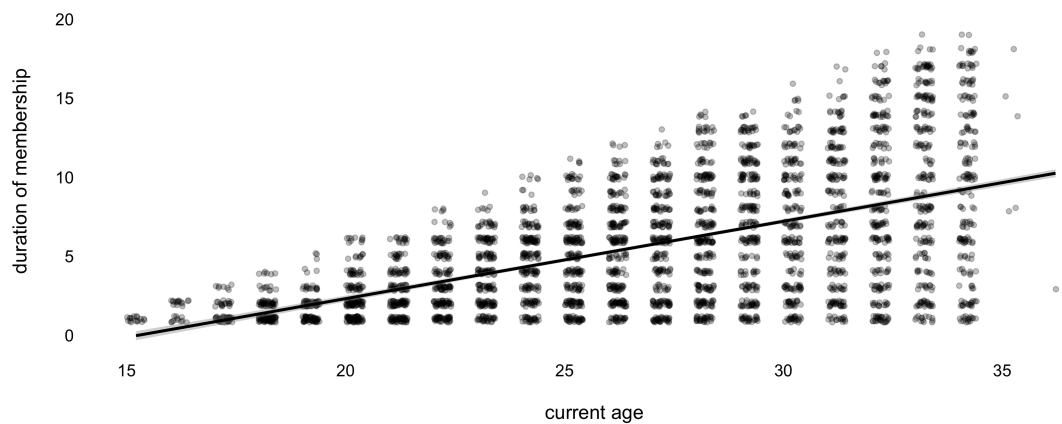
The young members in the survey joined the party between the age of 14 and 33. The mean joining age of those surveyed was 20.8 years, and half of the respondents joined the party before their 21st birthday. Men joined on average about half a year earlier than women, a difference that is statistically significant. The peak was at the age of 18 with 11% of the members joining at that age, but 25% joined only after their

24th birthday. The members in the sample had been party members for 5.5 years on average. Some members had been there for more than a decade, but the majority had been a party member for up to five years. There was no typical age for joining the party. While there is a medium correlation between age and duration of membership ( $r=0.55$ ), a scatterplot shows that older members had varying durations of membership, and it was common to join the party at very different ages (Figure 3.4).

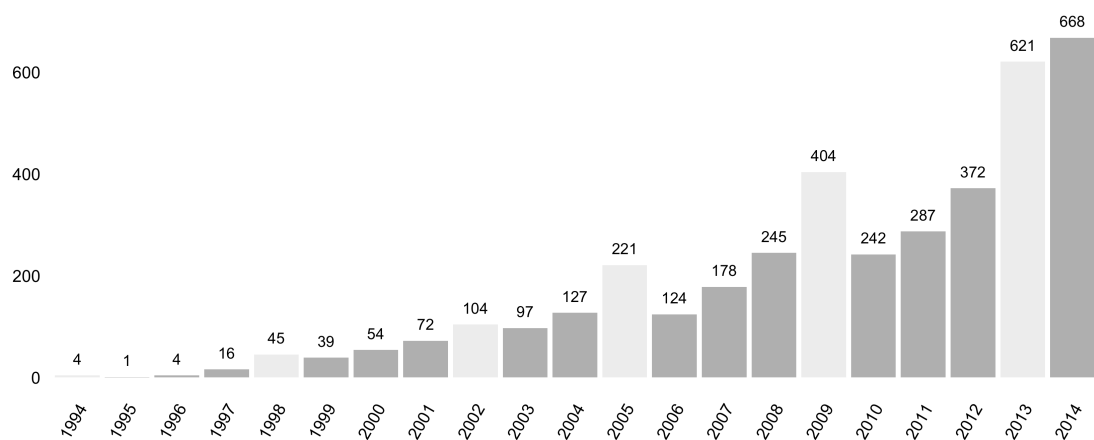
Examining the years in which the young members joined the party shows that the election years of 2005 and 2009 stand out in terms of more young people joining the party. Such an increase did not occur in the election year of 2013 (Figure 3.5). This is a bit surprising, especially since the 2013 elections resulted in the first membership vote on the coalition contract after the elections, which could have caused even more members to join the party. The motives behind why the members joined the party are discussed further in Chapters 4 and 6.



**Figure 3.3: Age distribution in the population and the sample, showing men, women and total.** The population data is based on information received from the SPD headquarters.



**Figure 3.4: Age and duration of membership in the sample, with one point for each case and darker areas showing higher number of cases.** The line is a linear regression line, regressing from duration to age.



**Figure 3.5: The year of joining the party according to the sample.** National election years are marked light grey, showing the trend of increased numbers in these years except in 2013.

The regional distribution of the sample, which was measured on the federal state level, followed the distribution of the whole party organisation (Niedermayer 2016a). North Rhine Westphalia held by far the largest share of members surveyed with almost one quarter of all young members living there (22.6%). The southern states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg each held another 12% of the sample. The share of members in the eastern states was comparably low, excluding Berlin where 8% of the young members in the sample lived.

The educational level in the sample can be considered to be very high. Given that the age of the respondents includes some who had not finished their educational process, the level may be even higher. 86,5% of the young party members hold a school degree, such as the (*Fachabitur* or *Abitur*), that allows them to enter higher education. The last study of German party members already revealed that party members have a higher level of formal education than average. In 2009, 53% of the party members had a (Fach-)Abitur, compared to 24% in the society. The SPD members differed only a little with 50% (Klein 2011, 47). Almost half of the young members in the sample held a bachelor's or a master's degree (47,1%). This is also a bit higher than the rate of university degree holders in all German parties (39%). The steady increase in formal education in the past years increased the rate of potential students in Germany to 53% in 2014. The young party members in the sample are part of this generation with a higher formal level of education. Despite these societal developments, the trend that party members are far better educated than average seems to be even stronger among the younger members.

The educational statistics of the sample also reflect the fact that many of the young members were still in their educational process. 30.1% of the young members surveyed did not obtain any third sector (vocational training or higher education) degree. The occupational situation of the members reflected their life stage as well. 10% of the young members were school students, and one third was studying in higher education. Almost 30% were working full-time, and another 7,8% of them were working part-time. Their living situation showed the somewhat premature live stage of the young party members surveyed. Roughly 40% lived either alone or in a shared flat, and one quarter still lived with parents or other relatives. Another quarter lived with a partner. Only 10% stated that they lived with children in the same household. The young party members in the

sample reflect the heterogeneity of the life phase between adolescence and adulthood.

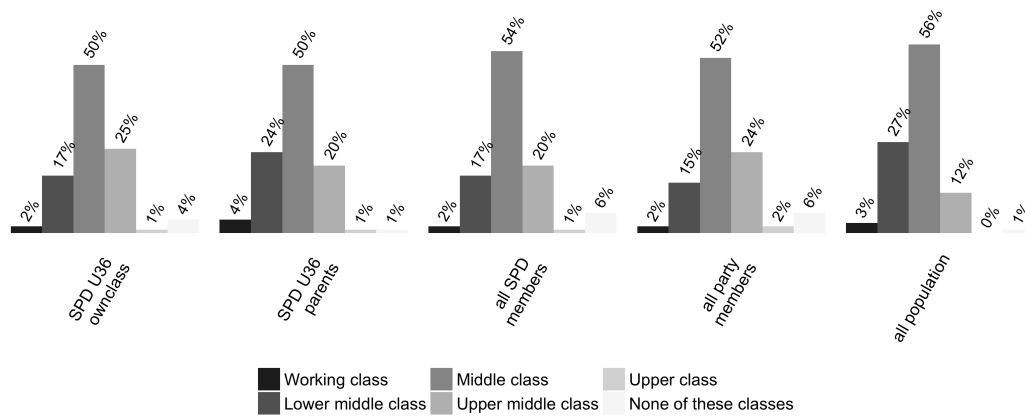
While the tendency of a higher educated party membership seems to be even stronger among the younger party members, there are indicators that the young party members in the SPD still resemble the traditional social democratic milieu to a certain extent. Examining their family relation with the party, their trade union membership and their self-attribution of belonging to a social class demonstrates this resemblance.

The majority of the young SPD members surveyed did not come from a family of SPD members, at least not at the level of their parents. 75% said that none of their parents had ever been a member of the same party. However, this means that 25% of them had parents who were party members. Taking into consideration the small share of party members in society (see above), this percentage indicates that family still plays an important role for young people. The relevance of a family "heritage" of party membership in the same party resembles what we already know about local council deputies in the biggest German state, Bavaria (Goerres et al. 2016). It also confirms that the parents of the young party members are by no means representative of the average population's relation to parties.

Another indicator for the traditional milieu of the SPD is trade union membership. The study of German party members showed that despite a shift in this relation, the SPD still has the highest share of union members among its rank and file. 42% of the SPD members were union members in 2009, compared to only 14-20% in society (Klein 2011, 54; Greef 2014, 703)<sup>3</sup>. The young members in the sample had a lower share of union members than the SPD as a whole, as only 29% were members of a union. This is partly due to the fact that many of the young members surveyed were not part of the working life yet. Among those that were already working, the share of union members raised to 50%. This is even higher than within the whole party and is especially remarkable because other research showed that union membership is shrinking among younger Germans, calculating a union member share as low as 6% among those born after 1981 (Schmidt and Knipperts 2014, 889).

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<sup>3</sup>The share of union members differs depending on the numerator and the denominator in the formula. Sometimes the denominator refers to only the working population, but sometimes it includes job seekers as well. The numerator sometimes also includes students, pensioners and job seekers, but sometimes it does not. See Greef 2014, 699-702.



**Figure 3.6: Self-attribution to a social class** among young party members (attribution of themselves and their parents when the young members were children), compared with the self-attribution of all SPD members, all party members in Germany and the German population. Data source: SPD members, all German party members and German population data based on Klein 2011, 52. Difference to 100 due to rounding. Reading example: 17% of the young party members in the survey say that they attribute themselves to the lower middle-class, while 24% attribute their parents to the lower middle-class while they themselves were children.

The self-attribution of a social class also could demonstrate how much the parties still represent social cleavages. The 2009 data showed that there are differences between the German parties according to the self-attribution of social classes, but they follow the expected ideological lines (Klein 2011, 53f.). The young party members considered themselves to be members of social classes in a similar pattern as the SPD members in general did. Half of them felt that they belonged to the middle class, one quarter felt that they belonged to the upper middle class and around 17% felt that they belonged to the lower middle class. In order to determine whether these young people perceived themselves as social climbers, they were asked about what class to which they thought their parents belonged when they were children. There is only little difference between these two attributions with only a minor tendency to shift between lower middle class to middle class and from middle class to upper middle class visible. Compared to the self-attribution of social class among party members in Germany and the general population, the young party members in the survey did not deviate much from the SPD members in general (Figure 3.6). But as is, they are very likely to reproduce the general trend of party members tending to come from higher classes than representing society as a whole (Klein 2011, 52).

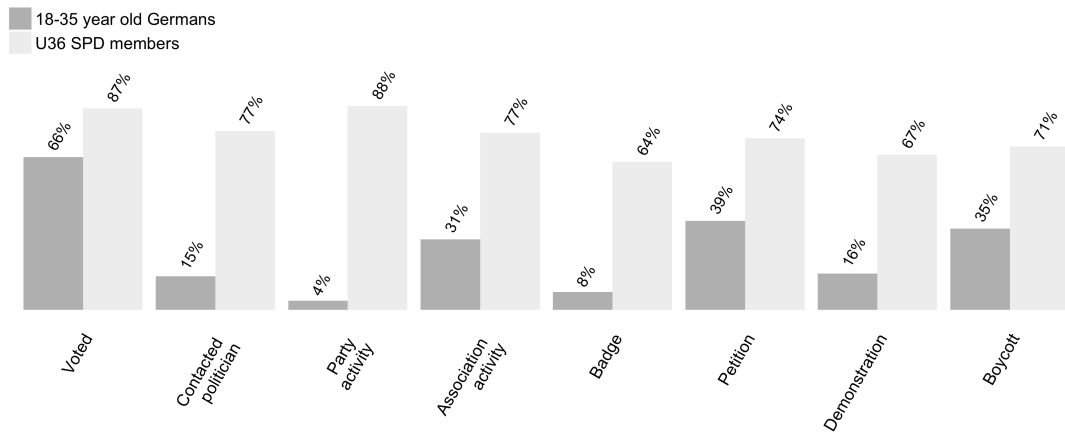
The examination of the sample data and its comparison with other available party

data shows what context in which the young party members in the sample are situated. Regarding age and their regional distribution, they are likely to be representative of the young members in the party as a whole. Their experience as a party member is heterogeneous in terms of how old they were when they joined the party as well as in the duration of their membership. This heterogeneity allows for the investigation into how these aspects might influence what they thought about the party that occurs in later chapters. Regarding their socio-political milieu, the data showed that young SPD members in the survey were rather well-educated, resembling the general trend in society. This trend is even stronger than the existing bias of party members in general. At the same time, they had a relatively high level of involvement in the traditional working class movement, measured by their parents' involvement in the party and their trade union membership. This shows that some aspects of a traditional milieu remained among this young members' group despite their individual educational advancement.

### Political Activity and Attitudes of the Young Members

The next section digs deeper into the political activities and attitudes of the young party members in the sample. According to the old hierarchical understanding of political participation (Milbrath 1965, 18), participation in a high-intensity activity often correlates with activity in lower-intensity activities. There are also indicators that specific types of political activities exist that entail similar activities, like the focus on contacting representatives or seeking expressive activities beyond official channels (Teorell et al. 2007, 340-348). The data from the survey confirms both aspects. The young party members were much more politically active than the average population in a similar age group, and they also showed a specific pattern in their activity focusing on the "representational channel" (Teorell et al. 2007, 341) of voting, participating in party activities and engaging with politicians.

The young SPD members in the sample were far more politically active than the comparative data on the 18-36 year old Germans suggests for this age group. For all eight forms of activities – voting, activity in a party, activity in a political association, wearing a political badge or sticker, signing a petition, demonstrating and boycotting for political reasons – at least two thirds of the members stated that they did this at least once during



**Figure 3.7: Political participation of young SPD members** compared with 18-35 year old Germans. Data source (Germany): ESS 7 2014, own calculations. See ??.

the prior 12 months. This confirms that direct political activity is not necessarily an alternative to party membership but can serve as a complement to it (Wauters 2016). Besides this generally much higher activity level of the party members among young people, also their activity patterns deviate from the young German population. The party members surveyed were more active in the traditional forms of political participation, especially and not surprisingly in party activities but also in contacting politicians and activities in political associations other than parties. They were less active on the informal types of activities. This is the opposite of the trends among young people in general (Figure 3.7).

The young members' activity within the party is also important to examine. There are different ways to measure a person's activity level in the party. This study examines both the amount of time that the young members spent for party-related activities and their assessment of their own activity level. A bivariate analysis of the both measurements shows that the frequency of their activities correlates with their self-perceived activity level (see Appendix, Figure A.2). From this point, this study concentrates on the variable that measures the frequency that young members spent time on party-related activities.

Given that young members might not only be active in the party itself but also in its youth organisation, questions about the frequency of participation in both activities were asked separately. This also shows what context was more important for the young members. The relations between time spent on activities in the party organisation and



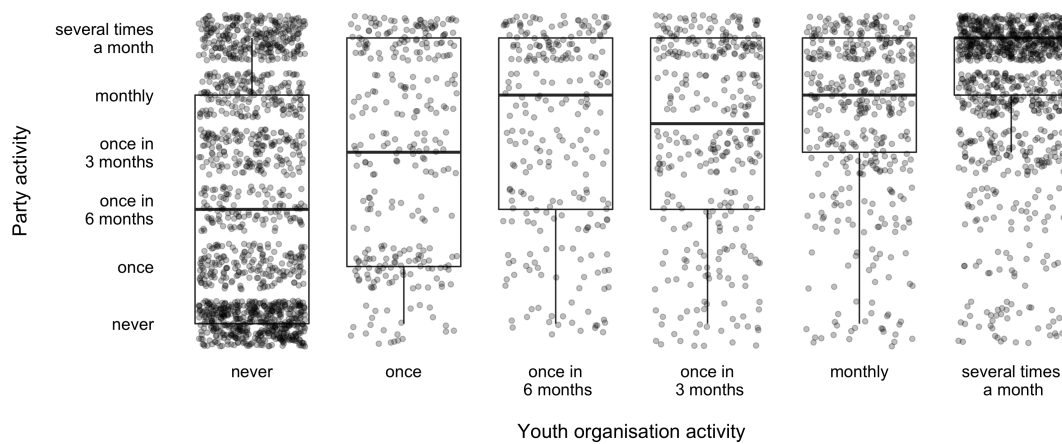
time spent on activities in the youth organisation show two distinct activity patterns. The young members were either very active in the youth organisation or not active at all. There is one group of 13.5% of the young members who did not participate in either youth organisation activities or party activities. They can be considered to be completely passive. Another group that stands out is the opposite; 14.5% of the young members were active several times a month in both the party and youth organisation during the prior year.

The surveys of German party members showed a lower activity level among the party members (Klein 2011, 99): One third of the members were inactive in 2009, while in 1998 the level of inactive members even reached 39%. It is difficult to compare these numbers due to differences in measurement, but the increased activity level from 1998 to 2009 and the survey data in this study may indicate that once the decision to join a party becomes less likely for young people, those that finally join a party are more likely to be an active member. It should be kept in mind that the more active members are probably also more likely to take part in a survey that reached them via their party, so these results are only a first indication.

The young members differed sharply regarding their youth organisation activity. They were either very active in the youth organisation or they had never been there in the year prior to the survey. While the latter group was very heterogeneous in their party activity, ranging from no activity to frequent participation, those that were frequently active in the youth organisation also tended to be more active in the party (Figure 3.8). This might mean that the youth organisation is not so much a place for all young party members but that a subgroup of the active young party members is also very active in the youth organisation. There are two possible interpretations. The youth organisation either brings together those who are already active in the party or participation in the youth organisation also increases participation in the party. As the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow for the identification of the cause and effect of this correlation, the following chapters try to shed more light on that relation from the interviews with young party activists.<sup>4</sup> In basic terms, there were two very

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<sup>4</sup>A third cause could be a possible measurement error. Members who were active in the youth organisation might have perceived no difference between the party and the youth organisation and therefore gave similar answers to both questions. To check this, correlations have been calculated



**Figure 3.8: Activity in the party and youth organisation.** Frequency of party and youth organisation activities among the young members during the 12 months before the survey. Each dot represents one case. Darker shades represent more cases in the respective area.

different groups among the young members: one that was very active and one that was very inactive.

The final aspect of the young members' party involvement covers their access to elected positions within the party. Once again, positions in both the party and the youth organisation were polled in order to cover the party including its youth section as a potential arena for being involved in party activities. Being elected was formulated in a very broad sense and covers not only leadership positions but also delegations to the party congress on any level. The threshold to answer such an item with "Yes" is thus rather low. Half of the young members had never held any elected position in the party. The same held true for the youth organisation. Combining these two aspects, there was more than one third of the members that had neither been elected in the party nor in the youth organisation. The divide between those who were active both in the youth organisation and the party organisation resembles the data on the activity frequencies: Two thirds of the incumbents at the time of the survey had been in youth organisation positions as well and one third had never been elected within the youth organisation (see Appendix, table A.5). Data on the level of involvement shows that most young members had only been elected to positions on the local level, as 89% of those members who had ever been elected obtained positions on the local level. The local level in the

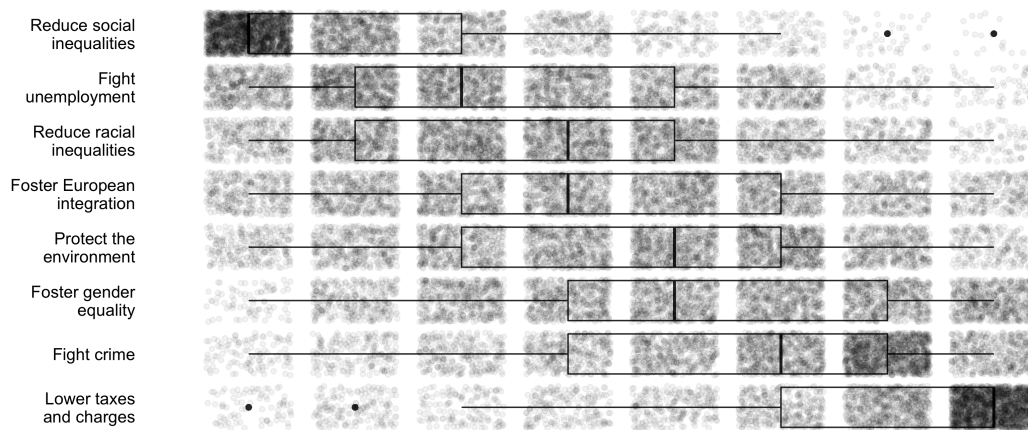
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between both activity types. The results do not support the assumption. The correlation between the activity levels is  $r=0.42^{***}$  (Pearsons) among all cases. Among those who were active once in three months or more, the correlation is only  $r=0.17^{***}$ .

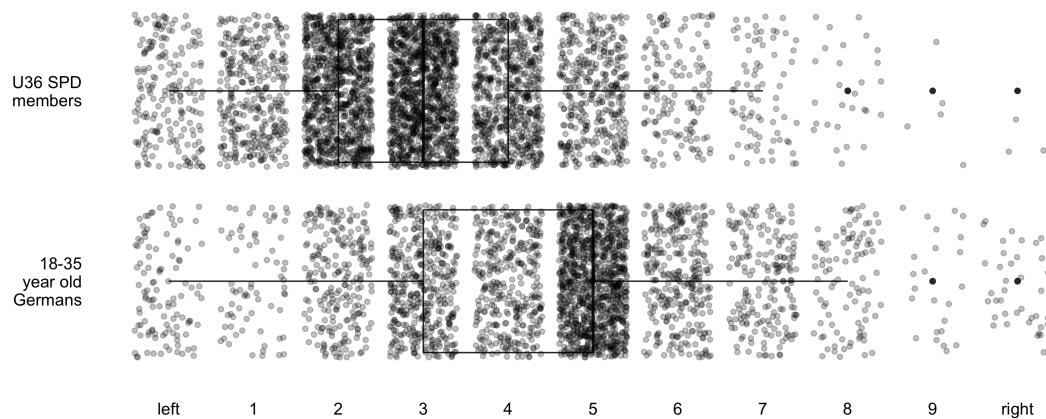
party organisation seemed to be the most accessible area for the young members and the entry point for party activities (See Appendix, table A.6).

The last aspect examined is the political attitudes of the party members. An often discussed issue in relation to the decreased role of traditional political milieus is the growing importance of post-material values at the expense of materialist issues among the younger generations (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). This provides justification for identifying the political issues that the young party members considered to be important. As there is a widespread tendency for survey-takers to consider many issues as important when asked separately, the young members were asked to prioritise eight different policy issues by ranking them from 1 to 8. The results of this ranking are displayed in the figure 3.9. There was a "winner" and a "loser" among the topics. The figure shows that the typical social democratic topics, such as reducing social inequality and fighting unemployment, were the top priorities for many of the members. They can also be considered to be materialist issues. The two least important issues can also be considered to be materialist issues, but they are usually considered to be conservative priorities. The post-materialist issues were located in the middle of the priority ranking for most members.

The decision between tax increases and cuts to the social welfare system is part of "the big tradeoff" (Okun 2015), a typical political issue with a conflict between two popular political aims: easing the tax burden and improving the social welfare system. When asked where they position themselves on a scale that ranges from 0, which signifies preferring cuts to the welfare state, to 10, which signifies preferring to increase taxes, the young party members answered mainly in favour of increasing taxes and thus followed a classic social democratic paradigm. This attitude also fit their self-positioning on a left-right scale. The overarching majority of the young members positioned themselves left of the centre of the political line. Their mean value on this scale was 3.03, which is a bit more left than the average 3.4 of all SPD members calculated in 2009 (Spier 2011, 125). The number is clearly more left than the whole German adult population under 36 years of age, which has a median of 5 (Figure 3.10).



**Figure 3.9: Political priorities of the young party members**, results from a ranking of eight policy areas. The x-axis shows the rank. Each dot represents one case. Darker shades represent more cases in the respective area. Reading example: 50% of the young members put the policy issue "Reduce social inequalities" on rank 1 out of 8.



**Figure 3.10: Self-positioning of the young party members**, results of a positioning on a left-right scale, compared with all Germans between 18 and 35 years. Each dot represents one case. Darker shades represent more cases in the respective area. Data source for all Germans: (ESS 7 2014), own calculation. Note the mean for all Germans is 5.01 (weighted and unweighted).

## Conclusion

This chapter provided a rationale for the case selection as well as a discussion of the collected data and a first insight into the survey data. Choosing the case of young party members in the SPD in Germany means analysing young people in a party that has faced severe losses of members and lost its attractiveness for young people but still stands out among the German parties in recruiting young people among its new members. With around 5,000 young people joining the SPD per year, they still are a relevant group despite the general overbalance of older people in the party. The party is moderately

changing in the mainstream direction of party centralisation, but it still keeps up its self-identification as a mass member party, especially by increasing its direct member involvement. Young members in this party differ from the mainstream of their peers in that they still belong to an organisation of traditional politics.

The research strategy seeks to find patterns of motivation and experiences from in-depth data with party activists as well as a verification of these aspects among the whole population of young party members. This short view into the survey data shows some important characteristics about the group that is examined in the following chapters. The sample data can be considered to represent all young party members with the reservation that there is a somewhat normal bias of lesser-educated and less active members to be less likely to answer the survey. As there is no data available that can verify this assumption, this cannot be more than an educated guess, and it must be taken into consideration during the analysis.

The survey data indicates that the young people joining the SPD are not representative of their age group in German society. They differ in their relation to the traditional working class institutions, and their political participation pattern is different. They prefer some typical social democratic policy areas and consider themselves to be politically more left than the average young German. However, they are also open to post-materialist policy areas. The young party members are a highly active group with a close relation to traditional political participation and an above-average level of family relations with the SPD. There are also some hints of differences between the young party members and the average party members. Their educational level is high, both compared to their age peers and to the average party member. This indicates a trend where the educational gap between those in a party and those outside a party may be even greater in the future. The young members also seem to be rather active in the party, but there is also a group of inactive members, while others are high intensity activists who spend a lot of time on both the party and its youth organisation.

The survey data indicates that the young members are a heterogeneous group. The following chapters shed more light on what the motives for choosing this high-intensity form of political participation are and how experiences in the party shape the perspectives of young members. The heterogeneity among the young members also implies that

some young members are more confident with what the party offers them.

Qualitative part

## Chapter 4

# Understanding the Process of Joining the Party

“Be part of the party.”<sup>1</sup>

Analysing the process of joining a party is essential to this study because it marks the starting point for each party membership. Knowing what makes someone join a party provides a basis for understanding further the party members' experiences and future perspectives. Chapter 2 demonstrated that the body of literature on explaining political activities, including party membership, is enormous. As the chapter discussed, these explanations for party membership may not fully apply to the special group of young members and their specific life stage (Bruter and Harrison 2009b, 1263). Additionally, an analysis of members' rationalisations for joining a party is still missing from the literature and we do not yet know how they perceive the influence of resources and incentives on joining. The following chapter steps into that void by analysing how young party activists remember their way into the party and how they rationalise their decisions to join.

In this chapter, joining a party is understood as a process. For many of the activists, joining a party was not a clear-cut decision but a process that started with first contacts with party members and ended with the decision to become an official member and

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Cover picture of the Jusos facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/Jusos.in.der.SPD> [23/02/2017].



finally engage in party activities. Others joined the party and only afterwards met other members and got an idea about the organisation. Yet most had contact with other party members prior to joining, or they went to open party events before they officially became a member. Some even got involved in party activities before they officially joined. These heterogeneous ways of becoming a party member are supported by the party, which uses formal mechanisms like guest memberships and offers events to non-members. However, it also seems to be common for young people to “diffuse” into the party and youth organisation by first choosing to take part in some activities and only afterwards deciding to join. Given these diverse ways of becoming a member, the interviews conducted for this analysis covered the whole process from the first contact with the party to the final decision to join and take part more regularly in activities.

Party membership is usually explained by individual, mostly socioeconomic resources or the motivation of the individual to join a collective organisation. These two logics also provide the conceptual frame for this analysis, but as has been argued in Chapter 2, resources likely influence incentives. I use the first step of the analysis to clarify which resources and incentives play a role for young party activists. The second step identifies these resources and incentives within the rationalisations of the young activists. Finally, I discuss what any connection between these different logics may look like.

This chapter uses data from the ten in-depth interviews with young activists in the SPD.<sup>2</sup> The special subgroup of young activists ensures that the interview partners went through a full process of joining including the development of activism. All interviewees perceive themselves as active members and they are or have been involved in a working group or through an official position in the party. The interview approach provides an understanding of how the individual constructs meaning and how young party activists rationalise their joining process. This adds an important aspect to what we know about the logics of joining mass member organisations, as it relies on the activists’ constructions of meaning and suggests possible connections between resources and incentives. The approach provides the basis for an analysis that is not representative for all young party members but only for those who became active members. It will help to explain not only what makes young members join but also what influences the whole process of

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<sup>2</sup>The procedure of the data collection is discussed in Chapter 3.

joining and developing activism.

The results of the interviews show that both explanatory logics provide a good framework for understanding how members experience and rationalise their own process of joining. The tripartite resource structure of time, money and knowledge (Brady et al. 1995) explains what influences the process of joining. In the interviews, knowledge was most important in understanding the joining process, while money played almost no role. The incentives, divided into moral-ideological, professional and social benefits (Bruter and Harrison 2009a), cover the reasons that party members rationalised for themselves. The analysis also reveals the connection between the two logics, where resources are a necessary condition and incentives are a sufficient condition for party membership. The young activists were very heterogeneous in how they ended up in the party, and there is not "typical way" of entering this activity. However, there are some general patterns. This chapter describes the diverse patterns of the joining process and the relevance of incentives and resources to this process.

## 4.1 Two Logics that Explain Becoming a Party Member

The following analysis in this chapter uses qualitative content analysis methodology, which includes a coding frame and then applying the codes to the data. This particular chapter is based on the first section of the overall coding frame, covering the categories of resources and incentives for party membership. The coding frame was developed using a combination of deductive and inductive techniques.<sup>3</sup> The main distinction between explanations of political activity is whether an individual's resources or the incentives of the individual's activity are taken into consideration. This distinction between resource-based explanations and incentive-based explanations of party membership provides the analytical framework for the analysis. It is reflected in the structure of the coding scheme as the two main categories for this part of the analysis: *Resources* and *Incentives*.

Based on the extensive research on both logics (see Chapter 2), it is possible to derive a set of subcategories that differentiate the different mechanisms in both logics. The subcategories of the category *Resources* are *Time*, *Money* and *Knowledge*. The

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<sup>3</sup>Full coding frame in Appendix A.4. For an elaboration of the data analysis procedure and the development of the coding scheme, see Chapter 3.

subcategories of *Incentives* are *Moral-ideological Incentives*, *Professional Incentives* and *Social Incentives*. Each subcategory is accompanied by a corresponding guiding question that was used in the coding process. All parts of the interview that provided an answer to one of the guiding questions were coded into the appropriate subcategory. The following sections elaborate the rationale for the subcategories and develop their guiding questions. For an overview over the coding frame relevant for this chapter see Table 4.1.

| <i>Main category</i> | <i>Subcategory and guiding question</i>  |
|----------------------|--|
| Resources            | <p><i>Time</i></p> <p>How do young party members experience time constraints when they join the party, for example due to their occupation situation or because of family or care duties?</p> <p><i>Money</i></p> <p>What role does money play for young party members when they reflect about their joining of the party?</p> <p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <p>What kind of knowledge and skills influence the young members' decision to join the party?</p> |
| Incentives           | <p><i>Moral-ideological Incentives</i></p> <p>What arguments for their party membership do young members find that are driven by moral or ideological reasons?</p> <p><i>Professional Incentives</i></p> <p>What individual benefits play a role in motivating young party members to join their party?</p> <p><i>Social Incentives</i></p> <p>Which social benefits of part membership do the young members view as important?</p>                      |

**Table 4.1: Coding frame for interview analysis, part 1: Joining the party.** Summary of guiding questions and the coding scheme for the qualitative content analysis on resources and incentives for membership.

## Resources as Explanations for Party Membership

The first section of the coding frame features the analysis of resources as explanations for party membership. According to the most prominent resource-based explanation of political participation, the socio-economic standard model, the individual socio-economic situation influences whether someone participates in politics, and those who are better off are more likely to participate. This means the more time, money and civic skills someone has, the higher the chances are that they participate in politics (Brady et al. 1995; Harding 1991; Verba and Nie 1976). While this model applies to participation in general, becoming a party member, which is classified as high intensity participation, is influenced by these aspects as well. The following sections outline how the relevance of individual resources might influence young people especially when they join a party and discuss the general trends outlined in Chapter 2 in terms of their particular application to younger (potential) party members.

### Time

The role of time as a resource for party membership seems to be easily explained. For a thorough understanding of the role of time, however, the understanding of time as a resource should be shifted from availability to flexibility. Joining a party as opposed to other political activity, such as demonstrating or voting, features periodic activities and requires a long-term commitment. The resource of time thus plays a role when someone considers joining a party. The activities of a party member require probably not only time as such but also time during particular time frames. Especially in the case of party activities that are organised around electoral campaigns, the availability of time resources as well as individual flexibility are important. Campaign-oriented party activities are concentrated around events like elections, so there may be heavy fluctuations in the need for time of activists. Young people who have not yet entered the labour market may be more likely to join, as they may be more flexible. At the same time, young people who have family and care duties are also members. The time resource is understood as flexibility in this analysis.

The life-cycle effect may also play a role in time as a resource. As discussed previously,

life-cycle effects impact voting when young people leave their families after graduating from high school and moving to another city for their further education (Bergh 2014; Bergh and Ødegård 2013). Being in this so-called *rush hour of life* could have both a positive and a negative effect on young people's availability for party membership. Young people may use this phase as a time where they are open to new experiences. They also use this phase of emerging adulthood to develop the own self-identity and find their place within social networks. However, they could also be unsure about their future, especially regarding where and how they will live in a couple of years, which may distract them from a long-term commitment like party membership. These different aspects of time as a resource that can influence the joining process of young party members are analysed using the guiding question:

- How do young party members experience time constraints when they join the party, for example due to their occupation situation or because of family or care duties?

## Money

Money as a resource for party membership is debatable, as it is difficult to distinguish from other resources. Money likely has a strong influence on those types of political participation where money in itself is the activity, such as donating to a party or a campaign. In a wider sense, money usually does not directly influence political participation but rather stands as a proxy for the economic conditions of an individual. In a Maslow pyramid of needs-based explanations, someone with low financial resources has other worries than political activism. Weak economic resources that require working more than one job (or a job while studying) might influence political participation, but the reason for not joining the party is most likely rationalised as being time-related rather than money-related.

The role of money is also potentially influenced by the specific life stage of young people. The special group of young people encompasses many who are still studying and may be living temporarily on sparse financial resources, even though they did not grow up in a family with low financial means. At the same time, party activity is not very expensive in the SPD. There are special membership discounts for students

that should minimise the direct financial burden of a party membership. However, the introduction of a moderate fee has been proven to be responsible for a decline of young party members in Norway between 2008 and 2010 (Ødegård 2014, 139), although the effect was not strong. While money-related aspects are likely not as important for the joining process, the interviews are analysed in terms of the impact of financial means on the young activists. The guiding question for the influence of financial resources on party membership is:

- What role does money play for young party members when they reflect about their joining of the party?

## Knowledge

Knowledge as a resource is derived from the relevance of civic skills in the socio-economic status model (Brady et al. 1995). As it pertains to the influence of civic skills on party membership, the *knowledge* about the party, the role of parties in politics and the opportunities for joining a party and garnering influence as a member is important. The knowledge one has about these topics is likely informed by classical educational processes where civic education is part of the curriculum, but informal learning processes may be even more important for young activists. Social networks, family, friends and job contacts can also provide access to knowledge about the party and politics.

As discussed in Chapter 2, education has an indirect impact on participation in general and party membership in particular. Education is mediated through the individual's position in social networks, which are usually heavily shaped through educational participation. The educational process in schools, colleges and universities leads to contacts and networks that make joining a party easier (Persson 2014). For example, knowing school classmates or university colleagues who are already party members makes it easier to gain access to a party. Aside from education, these networks can be built on previous political activism, which can be sometimes even connected with education when this activism originated in school activities.

These social networks that foster political participation are not only established through educational networks. Case studies showed that young party members are more likely to have parents who were already party members (Young and Cross 2007).

Parents or other family members with a party membership introduce young people to the party at a young age. This may make the party more accessible to those young people. Even in this case, however, the self-perception of knowledge about the party and politics is likely more important than the absolute knowledge one possesses. The interviews examine the self-perceptions of young party activists. They are analysed based on the question of how these personal relations with the party (meaning mainly other party members) provided the young activists with resources and influenced their joining process. The guiding question for analysing the influence of skills as a resource for party membership is:

- What kind of knowledge and skills influence the young members' decision to join the party?

### Incentive-based Explanations for Party Membership

The second section analyses the incentive-based explanations for party membership. Incentives should be understood as the result of a cost-benefit calculation on the *expected* effects of party membership. Most benefits are difficult to measure by their nature, such as the aim of changing society for better or wanting to influence party policies, and they are not more than an assumption when joining the party. But they are benefits in the sense that they fulfil a need that the party member usually considers to be relevant. This analysis is based on a modification of the classic division between individual incentives that benefit only the individual and collective incentives that answer a more general demand and are beneficial for a bigger group (Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Whiteley, Seyd and Richardson 1994). As it applies to young party members (Bruter and Harrison 2009a), the classic distinction is modified into the trichotomous model of *moral incentives* that cover motivations of general ideological and moral types, *professional incentives*, that cover individual benefits, especially those that might provide the member with personal or professional career opportunities, and *social benefits* that cover the social life and well-being of the members. These three types of incentives provide the subcategories for the analysis.

### **Moral-ideological Incentives**

Moral-ideological incentives cover benefits that are related to the expression of political convictions or moral obligations. Dating back to Kirchheimer's work (1965), the ideological orientation of political parties weakened as mass member parties that were based in specific milieus developed into catch-all parties. In the policy cartel of the cartel parties, the ideologies of the parties converge and become effectively irrelevant (Katz and Mair 1995). Despite the declining importance of ideology in such parties, moral-ideological incentives are still the dominant motivations for a majority of party members in different party member surveys (Bruter and Harrison 2009b; Heidar and Saglie 2003b). This category of incentives covers different kinds of expressive benefits, such as aligning oneself with a political organisation or supporting a certain policy, but it includes also moral aspects, such as acting as a good citizen and doing something seen as valuable.

The developmental life stage of youth and adolescence may influence the moral benefits of a group membership. Young people are still developing their ideological base and moral convictions. This has a strong impact on their political participation, as shown in various voting and youth parliament studies (Panagopoulos and Abrajano 2014; Shephard and Patrikios 2013). Young people may not join a party from a substantial conviction but rather formulate a loose attachment to certain ideas that they connect with the party. It is possible that once their conviction develops further, their attachment to the party may be affected. The analysis evaluates what kind of moral-ideological motivations the young activists show and how they relate these motivations to their choice for that particular party. The guiding question in analysing the relevance of moral-ideological motivations for party members is:

- What arguments for their party membership do young members find that are driven by moral or ideological reasons?

### **Professional Incentives**

Professional incentives cover those benefits that provide the party member with an individual advantage, particularly in terms of a potential future career within the party.



As Heidar and Saglie (2003b) and Bruter and Harrison (2009b) argued, career-seeking members could go stronger in declining parties, as smaller shares of the population join parties, and the remaining members' career chances increase. In Chapter 5, I also argue that the professionalisation of parties has a need for those interested in a career to fill spots in the party headquarters. It should therefore be likely that certain professional incentives, such as access to decision-makers, networks and information that increases career prospects, might be important at least for some young members.

While professional incentives may be important for some members, the beneficial nature of professional incentives requires a careful analysis. These kinds of incentives for party membership are difficult to measure, as there is a strong social pressure not to express personal career interests too much. This means that pure career motivations are unlikely to be expressed directly when young people are asked about why they became a party member. But professional incentives can be understood in a wider sense as the individual benefits that party membership provides, which might help both a party career and provide contacts and access for future professional opportunities outside of the party. Especially the steady increase of networks and contacts could be important for young people who are still furthering their education and are only gradually planning their entry into the workforce. This analysis focuses on a broad understanding of professional incentives in order to address both the social desirability problem and special life phase of the young activists. The guiding question to analyse the relevance of professional incentives for party membership is:

- What individual benefits play a role in motivating young party members to join their party?

### Social Incentives

Social incentives cover all benefits that a party might provide regarding the social life of members. Even though parties no longer provide the socialisation role to their respective classes as in the era of mass member parties, the role of parties as a place to meet like-minded others in a social atmosphere is still relevant. Thus, social incentives include those aspects of party membership that add to an individual's well-being, such as finding a social group or enjoying party-related activities. In previous studies, social incentives

were shown to be important for party members, especially young members (Bruter and Harrison 2009b).

Young people can be expected to invest their leisure time in socially rewarding activities, which could include party membership. The social role of parties as a place to meet like-minded others is not exceptional, as other political associations or even sport clubs could also play this role. The party may offer an added value in that it provides an ideologically oriented social environment to young people where they can network and meet with people who share the same beliefs or values. As with the moral-ideological incentives, social incentives are related to social aspects. The analysis focuses on how the young activists perceive the party as a place that returns these individual but not career-driven benefits. The guiding question for the analysis of the social motivations to join the party is:

- Which social benefits of part membership do the young members view as important?

## 4.2 Resources and Incentives in the Process of Joining

The two categories of *Resources* and *Incentives* that each include three subcategories constitute the basic coding frame for the following analysis. This framework is summarised and outlined in Table 4.1. Within these six areas, what motivates young party members during their process of joining the party is analysed. Based on the analysis, the connection between these two areas is discussed.

### Resources of Young Party Members

The analysis of the resources that the young activists mentioned when they described their way into the party shows that the knowledge about the party, both through formal education and informal connections to other party members, was their most relevant resource. Time also played a role, especially when they defined their role as party member between either a rank-and-file member or a member holding an elected position. Money can be considered to be almost irrelevant. Generally, the relevance of resources as a necessary condition for joining the party became apparent in the interviews.

## Time

The resource of time is important for joining and activism in the party in the following aspects: the balance of activism with other aspects of life, the dominance of student life time schedules and the life stage of youth as a time slot of instability. All three were mentioned as obstacles for participation, though not necessarily at the very first step of the joining process. During the process from first contacts to activism, all of the three aspects play a role.

In terms of the lack of time while balancing work and private life, an interviewee mentioned that she was shocked by the required amount of time for party activity when she joined and shortly thereafter was elected to a local executive committee. She withdrew from her positions after a year due to the amount of time that was required for them. She ultimately decided to remain a simple rank-and-file member, emphasizing her need for a private life.

“Well, I just realised after one year, if you want to be politically active, or anyway involved, you don’t need to have a position. Well, you don’t need to be on the leadership board and receive this surge of emails, which you can’t handle, if you also must work and want to have a private life, and I decided really not to run again but to stay among the rank-and-file members and take an active role there.”

“Also, ich habe einfach nur nach einem Jahr gemerkt, wenn man politisch aktiv sein möchte, oder überhaupt so engagiert sein möchte, dann muss man auch kein Amt haben. Also, man muss auch nicht im Vorstand sein und diese Flut von Mails bekommen, die man auch nicht durchschauen kann, wenn man auch noch arbeitet, und ein Privatleben haben möchte, und ich habe mich dann auch entschieden wirklich nicht mehr zu kandidieren, sondern auf der Basis zu bleiben, und mich dann weiterhin so aktiv einzubringen.”

*(Julia, l.8.)*<sup>4</sup>

This quote indicates that elected positions require lots of time, even though in this case her position was only in the youth organisation and only on the local level. The idea of being just an active grassroots member seems to be an attractive alternative, but later in the same interview is it apparent that the silent time pressure does not decrease and that it might be difficult to exert influence once focus is diverted from party activities:

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<sup>4</sup>Name of the interview partner and line in the transcript. For an overview of the interview partners see Appendix, table A.1.

“Well, if you don’t show up for, I don’t know, a couple of months, you will be asked, ‘nice to see you, you have not been here for a long time, and are you still active, do you still want to be active with the Jusos’, well, you sometimes really have to try to explain, hello, I have got a job, I do have a private life, that is on the first - well is my first priority, and then there is my involvement.”

“Also, wenn man dann, keine Ahnung, paar Monate nicht da war, wird man schon gefragt, ‘schön dich zu sehen, du warst ja so lange nicht mehr da, und bist du noch überhaupt aktiv, willst du noch bei den Jusos aktiv sein’, also man muss dann wirklich schon mal versuchen zu erklären, hallo ich habe eine Arbeit, ich habe noch ein Privatleben, das steht für mich an der obersten- also hat oberste Priorität, und dann kommt das Engagement.”

(*Julia, l.42.*)

The activist reacted in a rather surprised manner about the expectations of being regularly available. This shows that time requirements are not necessarily clear before someone joins a party. If young members do not know what kind of time investment is expected from them, these requirements cannot hinder their joining of the party. But time is relevant in the longer process of becoming either an activist or a potentially silent member who might also leave the party later on. The interviews also show that the beginning of party membership includes a process where young members find their role in the party. At this stage, time comes into play as part of the priority setting between involvement, work and other aspects of life.

Another activist complained about the student-dominated orientation of the youth activities that were difficult for her, as she was not a student but was working full-time. She accused the students in the local executive committee of organising the party events around a student time schedule, leading to "long discussions at meetings that take until 11 o'clock and I, myself, had to get up at six o'clock while the students could sleep in" (*Sarah, l.82*)<sup>5</sup>. This hints at the dominating role of academic culture among the young activists as a result of the higher numbers of students among the young members that became apparent in the demographic analysis of the survey data (see Chapter 3). Here it appears as a time constraint for activism.

A different aspect of time influences the moment of joining itself. This aspect is related to the specific life stage of the young activists, which is a developmental stage. Student activists experience their specific and rather unstable life situation as problematic for dedicating time to something like a party. They are only living in a specific place for two or three years and likely move either after their bachelor's degree or after

<sup>5</sup>orig.: “langen Diskussionen bei Sitzungen, dass die dann bis elf Uhr gehen, und man selber um sechs Uhr dann aufstehen muss, und die Studenten dann ausschlafen können.”

their master's degree. One activist recalled his thoughts before he joined the party. At first, he wanted to join after he finally had settled down:

“Well such a perspective that for me is clear is that this life stage goes from back then to now, and then there will be something different then something new will start, well, then I realised, okay, you cannot plan like this, because it is not possible to plan. Or, if you plan like this, you are missing many opportunities and you miss out on life.”

“Also so eine Perspektive, dass für mich eigentlich schon klar ist, dieser Lebensabschnitt, der geht bis dann und dann, und dann- dann geht wieder was anderes, dann geht was neues los, also das ist mir quasi aufgefallen, okay, du kannst so nicht planen, weil das ist nicht planbar. Oder wenn du so planst, dann verbaust du dir ja ganz viel und du kriegst vom Leben gar nichts- also so viel gar nicht mit.”

(Simon, l.10)

At the same time, the student life stage was an advantage for him, as he had less time restrictions and more opportunities for activism (Simon, l.32). However, this can be harmful as the activity endangered the study progress of many he knew. He expected this to prevent others from participating:

“You can see it here<sup>6</sup>, there are very many academics, they are all students, and especially those, who are very involved, they have to prolong their studies. And that is one reason ((laughs)) why fewer people want to do it. Because they feel the pressure, because they feel that they don't have the time for it.”

“Das sieht man ja hier, das sind ganz viele Akademiker, das sind alles Studenten, und vor allem die, die sich sehr engagieren, die überziehen das Studium. Und das ist auch ein Grund, ((lachend)) warum das weniger Leute machen. Weil sie den Druck spüren, weil sie das Gefühl haben, ich finde gar nicht die Zeit dazu.”

(Simon, l.32)

First, time as a resource plays an indirect role for the young activists while joining the party. Time comes into the joining process between first contacts with the party and forming an active membership in the form of social expectations of time commitment. Young activists feel these expectations to commit, which causes them to feel pressure. Second, time plays a role in the form of current life stage-related stability. Unstable life situations that involve relocating to different cities seem to influence a young person's choice to join an organisation with a long-term commitment, such as parties. The unstable life stage of a mobile student seems to contradict the structure of a localised organisation like a party that has local organisations and bottom-up pathways. Activists reported that they moved due to their studies and had to build up a new network within the party organisation (Paul, Simon), which makes this life stage not the right time for party activism. This shows that resource of time requires a broader understanding than just availability, and it has a rather latent effect on the young members' joining process.

<sup>6</sup>The interview was conducted during a party event.

## Money

Money as a resource that influences the joining process plays only a minor role for young activists. One activist reported that he was shocked to hear that he had to pay a membership fee when he wanted to join the party as a school student. At that time, it was quite some money for him.

“That was roughly around summer 2007, and then I looked into the offers, well, offers meaning the joining conditions, and I was quite perplexed, [...] that the SPD wanted to have a least 2.50 Euro membership fee per month. [...] Well, but these 2.50 Euro deterred me first, but then I thought, two-fifty, that is 30 Euros per year, that is somehow possible to pay from my pocket money, because back then I did not have any income.”

“Das war irgendwie so im Sommer oder so 2007, und dann hatte ich mir dann die Angebote, also Angebote im Sinne von die Eintrittsbedingungen angeguckt, und war dann ziemlich perplex, [...] dass die SPD 2,50 Monatsbeitrag Mindestmonatsbeitrag haben will. [...] Naja aber die 2 Euro 50 haben mich dann anfangs abgeschreckt, und dann irgendwann habe ich mir dann gedacht, zweifüfzig sind 30 Euro im Jahr, das kann man sich dann auch irgendwie vom Taschengeld quasi, da hatte ich noch kein Einkommen, irgendwie abzweigen.”

*(Martin, l.6)*

This was the only occurrence where any money-related aspect was mentioned by the young activists. The low amount of fees that is required did not matter for those that are in the party. The absence of money as an issue supports the claim that the party makes quite cheap for students to join the organisation, but it is also an effect of the sampling. Those that perceived the membership fees being too high to participate are by nature not part of the sample.

## Knowledge

Knowledge-related resources were by far the most important resources among the young party activists. The skills that the young activists mentioned as relevant during their process of joining the party were threefold: Job- or education-related knowledge about parties, family relations in the party and previous activism. Every activist mentioned at least one of these types of resources that influenced them when they joined the party.

Job- or education-related knowledge was a resource for joining for some activists, who gained exposure to party issues through their job or their work in school or university, such as preparing for an exam about party policies in a politics class in school (*Martin, l.6*) or completing an internship in a local party office.

“... because we know our member of parliament very well, I did an internship there, in 2005 after my middle school graduation during the summer holidays, which was during the federal elections campaign, and then I joined the SPD.”

“...da wir unsere Bundestagsabgeordnete sehr gut kennen, habe ich dann 2005 nach meiner mittleren Reife dann in den Sommerferien, da war gerade auch Bundeswahlkampf, ein Praktikum gemacht, und bin dann in die SPD auch eingetreten.”

(Sarah, l.6)

The activists described how they had to perform tasks for their studies that sparked interest in the party and made them ultimately join. These experiences fit with recent findings about the power of civic education in school and the impact of being a student in political science. Such educational experiences increase the likelihood of political participation, and they even might have the power to compensate for lower levels of family socialisation in young people’s voting participation (Dominguez et al. 2016; Neundorff et al. 2016). But working in an area that is close to politics also provides young people with knowledge resources that they consider relevant in their decision-making as we can see in another case. One activist joined the party because she wanted to better understand the political processes that she was exposed to in her part-time job in a local initiative on migration politics (*Julia, l.8*). She argued that her working environment was very close to the SPD and “and one is, I would say in a subtle way, socialised.” (*Julia, l.16*).<sup>7</sup> Knowledge resources can also help overcome the distance from parties, as another activist describes:

“... I studied political science, and ... I felt always close to the SPD, but nevertheless somehow, I never had-, I don’t know, had little relation to it, to really want to get involved, [...] I wrote my thesis about voting behaviour, which was in 2009, and I wanted to see how these election campaigns happen, in other words, how the party and their youth sections and people on the ground organise it, coordinate it, what is all included there? [...] I then did my internship there...”

“...ich habe Politikwissenschaften und Soziologie studiert, und .. war da eigentlich schon immer sehr nah an der SPD, und bin aber trotzdem irgendwie- habe da nie so den, ich weiß nicht, den Bezug gehabt, dass ich wirklich mich engagieren wollte, [...] Ich habe dann meine Abschlussarbeit geschrieben über Wählerverhalten, 2009 war das, und wollte dann mal sehen, wie das in diesem Wahlkampf eigentlich abläuft, also wie das quasi von der Partei und von den Jugendverbänden und von Leuten vor Ort organisiert wird, koordiniert wird, was gehört eigentlich da alles dazu? [...] habe dann dort mein Praktikum gemacht...”

(Simon, l.8)

This quote underlines the general distance that even a party member felt from parties before he got into personal contact with other members. His education provided him with the opportunity to work on the election campaign. Getting to know the party members personally helped him overcome this distance.

<sup>7</sup>orig.: “man wird halt so, also ich würde sagen, verdeckt, auch nochmal sozialisiert.”

For others activists, their educational situation provided them with a resource that they could give to the party to improve the party's policies in certain areas. This was the case for two activists in very different areas that they perceive to be underrepresented in the party: A disabled student of rehabilitation pedagogy worked on education and disability policies and led a working group on that issue (*Laura*, l.42-44), and a vocational training student worked on vocational training policies because he thought that there were not so many "non-students" and he could add something there (*Tom*, l.20). Interestingly, this perspective of knowledge as a resource came from two activists who perceived themselves to offer a minority perspective and thus were able to bring some added value into the party. These interview excerpts show that education can have manifold roles as a resource that influences party membership, both as initialiser for thinking about the party and as empowerment tool after making the decision to join the party.

Regarding the resource of family relations with the party, three different types of influence were apparent among the young activists. One group of activists had no family relations at all with the SPD or any other parties. The second type of family relations is the case of one activist who was "brought" to the party by her father through taking part in party events. The third and most interesting group is the activists who had more subtle family relations with the party. Some activists described how they did not know about family relations with the party or how they were not exposed to their family's connection with the party but only revealed the relation until after they became a member.

A classic path into the party is visible in the case of the young woman who was brought into the party by her father and described this as a rather passive act from her side, shifting between being asked to come with him and being just taken with him:



“... my dad is also a member of the SPD, and actually he took me there. There was an activity with our local section to explain what new people can do there, and my dad said to me, well, you just come with me. [...] Well, he just took me with him, he asked me, do you want to join me there, and then I went with him, I had a look at it, I liked it, and yes, I already knew some of them .. personally, and then I said, yes, I will just try it, I can do that.”

“...mein Papa ist auch in der SPD, und der hat mich da eigentlich mit reingebracht. Also bei uns im Ortsverein war da mal so eine Aktion, was man da neu machen kann, und mein Papa hat gemeint, da gehst du halt mal mit. [...] Also der hat mich einfach mitgenommen, der hat gefragt, willst du mal mitgehen, und dann bin ich einfach mitgegangen, habe mir das angeschaut, mir hat das gefallen, und ja ich habe auch schon ein paar von denen .. gekannt, so privat, und dann habe ich gesagt ja, probierst du es halt mal, kannst ja machen.”

*(Laura, l.10-12)*

This quote shows a very traditional influence of the family, which is exceptional among the activists in being so explicit. Several activists talked about a broader family relationship with the workers' movement and the SPD, but these connections were usually not influential when the activists became interested in the party. Family relationships can also be hidden, as one activist described. His parents were loosely oriented towards the SPD, but his uncle, who is a member, only approached him after he became a member, which he found impressive, although it did not influence his decision to join:

“Well, recently I learned that my uncle was also a party member, which I did not know, and he left the party because of the grand coalition. And that was simply really great. I did not know that, he never mentioned it to me when I joined that he was in the party, and then one time he just told me that he left after the decision for the grand coalition. That is actually really cool.”

“Also irgendwann dann vor Kurzem habe ich auch erfahren, dass mein Onkel, was ich nicht wusste, in der Partei war, und ausgetreten ist zu dieser großen Koalition. Und das war einfach ziemlich stark. Ich wusste das zwar nicht, er hat das auch nie erwähnt, mir gegenüber, als ich eingetreten bin, dass der in der Partei war, und dann hat er irgendwann mal erzählt dass er ausgetreten war, als die große Koalition beschlossen wurde. Das ist eigentlich schon ziemlich cool.”

*(Martin, l.22)*

The activist recounted this story in the context of the question "What brought you here?" and emphasised that he perceived this family relation to the party as important for his joining, even though it was not a direct cause.

But there are also activists who have no family relations with the party at all, and their families are even reluctant to support any of the parties. The activist who joined the party through her workplace, a local political immigrant initiative, said her family was distanced from parties and none of her friends were party members.

“Well, my friends are all non-partisan, my family has absolutely nothing to do with politics, we come from Russia, they were educated- very communist, and, well, politics was for them- well, they wonder why I am doing politics. And I also have no friends or acquaintances who are now members of other parties.”

“Also meine Bekannten und meine Freunde sind alle unparteiisch, meine Familie hat überhaupt mit Politik nichts am Hut, wir kommen aus Russland, die waren ja- sehr kommunistisch erzogen, und also, Politik war für sie- also die wundern sich, dass ich jetzt überhaupt Politik mache. Und ich habe auch keine Freunde oder keine Bekannte, die jetzt in anderen Parteien sind.”

*(Julia, l.16)*

For her, her relationship with politics and parties as such was not moderated by family and friend relations, but she got involved as a result of her politically-oriented workplace that she chose due to her immigrant background. This case shows that there are different resources providing young people with the necessary knowledge. Personal relations to party members in different forms such as family, education or workplace complement each other and encourage people to join the party. Personal relations, whether inside or outside the family, seem to play a decisive role in party membership.

Another resource that provides key knowledge is previous political activism. Young activists used their previous political activism as a resource because either they knew people in the party or the youth organisation or they knew about the strategic role of parties in the political process, therefore choosing the party intentionally. Previous activism enabled them to make an educated choice for the party, even though they did not have a positive picture of parties in the beginning, as one activist discussed:

“Well, I have been politically involved for a long time, but up until now, or up to the point I joined, never in an institutionalised form of the party because I rejected getting involved in such an institution for a very long time, and I said instead, we have to do this outside of parliament. But then I came to the decision to say okay, probably we have to use a two track strategy. Outside of parliament, as well as within the form of an institutionalised party, because, of course, only parties can influence certain processes.”

“Also ich bin sehr lange schon politisch engagiert, aber bisher eben, oder bis zu dem Zeitpunkt nie in einer institutionalisierten Form, im Sinne einer Partei, weil ich das auch lange Zeit abgelehnt habe, mich in solcher, also in solch einer Institution zu engagieren, und eher gesagt habe, man muss das außerparlamentarisch machen, dann ist aber die Entscheidung in mir gereift, dass ich gesagt habe okay, wahrscheinlich muss man da eher eine Doppelstrategie fahren, sowohl außerparlamentarisch wirken, aber auch in Form einer institutionalisierten Partei, weil die natürlich auch nur Parteien an bestimmten Prozessen mitarbeiten können.”

*(Paul, l.6)*

This shows that the knowledge and experience garnered from former activism resulted in the member overcoming his general rejection of parties. His joining was a pragmatic decision based on the insight that he might need such an organisation to exert influence in the way he desired. Other activists related their joining of the party to their previous

activities in school student activism or as a university student representative (*Peter, Christine*). The mechanism is the same in all three cases. Their experience with politics led them to believe that parties provide a good place to work towards social change in an institutionalised way, and their participation there is probably more effective than working outside of official politics.

The analysis of the different resources for party membership shows that knowledge-related resources are dominant within the narrations of the young activists. While time was only relevant on a certain level, financial aspects did not come across the young activists' minds at all when they reflected on their joining process. Knowledge, covering knowledge about the party as such and personal connections with the organisation, was mentioned by every activist. The impact of resources underlines how joining a party is a process for young members as well. Some had been involved in politics before and used this knowledge to make an educated decision about their membership. Others considered their membership in terms of their life stage. They had hesitated to join during rather unstable periods in their life and became members later-on. Both examples show that joining the party is not simply filling out and signing a membership form.

### Incentives of Young Party Members

The investigation into incentives for party membership confirms the dominance of moral-ideological incentives. This is the dominant and most elaborated form of incentives that the young activists mentioned. Social incentives also matter to a great extent, but they are less important than moral-ideological incentives. As expected, professional incentives least easy for the young people to rationalise.

### Moral-ideological Incentives

Every activist mentioned motivations that can be classified as moral-ideological incentives. These reasons have three important aspects. They differ between pure ideological convictions, moral duties and efficacy to influence the party and change society through the party.

The main ideological conviction of the young activists was that they want to fight

for social justice and related this fight to the core party ideology. They saw this fight as the main task for the party and felt the need to participate in that task, as this activist argued when discussing why he joined the party:

“We do not have such an equal society, and there were some points where I said, that is what I stand for and this is what I also find in the political programme of the party or in the values that the Jusos stand for, and then I said, actually it is crazy to refrain from it all the time and not do it.”

“Wir haben keine so gerechte Gesellschaft, und dann halt verschiedene Punkte gehabt, die, wo ich sage, für die stehe ich ein, und die finde ich halt auch im Grundsatzprogramm der Partei wieder, oder in den Werten, für die die Jusos eintreten, und habe dann gesagt, eigentlich ist es Schwachsinn, sich jetzt die ganze Zeit davon halt rauszunehmen und es nicht zu machen.”

(Simon, l.8)

The ideological incentive for this activist was to be part of an organisation that shared the same causes he agreed with. That is why he joined the party. The ideological associations the young activists made are in general strongly connected with the word *justice*. This agreement could also derive from previous activism and lead to an expected similarity between the ideology of the party and the young members' own beliefs. Another activist connected his previous activism with what he expects from social democratic ideology, particularly the enlargement of opportunities:

“Well, how exactly did I come to think about social democracy? .. I think, I was, ... when I was involved in higher education politics, I was always oriented towards an idea of justice, well, I was always somehow interested in offering as many opportunities to the most people when I was doing politics in committees.”

“Also wie ich auf den Gedanken Sozialdemokratie dann gekommen bin genau? .. ich glaube, ich habe .. . wenn ich Hochschulpolitik gemacht habe, dann habe ich mich schon immer an so einem- also einer Gerechtigkeitsvorstellung orientiert, also ich war immer irgendwie daran interessiert, möglichst vielen Leuten möglichst viele Möglichkeiten einzuräumen, wenn ich in Gremien Politik gemacht habe.”

(Peter, l.22)

This basic ideological congruence does not mean that the young activists took an uncritical stand towards their party. Closely related to ideological conviction is their belief in efficacy. An important aspect of becoming a party member for the young activists was to be able to influence the party and its policies. The dominating perspective was the chance to move the party more to the left, which is usually connected with the fight for social justice. One activist described his motivation as being part of a greater political strategy:

“There will be no left majority, left of the SPD in the future, I do not believe it. Well, I just do not believe in that. And that is why I think it is important to get involved in the SPD, to keep it as much to the left as possible. That is why I joined the SPD.”

“Es wird keine linke Mehrheit links von der SPD in Zukunft geben, daran glaube ich nicht. Also daran glaube ich einfach nicht, und darum glaube ich, dass es wichtig ist, sich in der SPD zu engagieren, um sie möglichst weit links zu halten. Darum bin ich in die SPD eingetreten.”

(Paul, l.14)

Some activists believed that young members in the party are more open for different positions and new approaches, so they can bring about changes in the party organisation (*Christine, l.26, Tom, l.20*). Another argument efficacy is the belief in influencing the party based on experiences from previous political activity (e.g. as a former higher education board member, *Peter*). To understand the importance of efficacy, the position of one activist is important. During his first and second visit to a party event, he was involved in some tasks and felt that he was really visibly making a difference, even though it was on a practical rather than a strictly speaking political level:

“That was really ... banal, the first positive thing with the SPD in the local section, that the website was really shit, and they said, well, you can just do that, and I said, yes, I did work on that, and it became really good.”

“Das war ganz .. banal, war das erste Positive bei der SPD im Ortsverein, dass die Internetseite total scheiße war, wo die dann gesagt haben ja, mach’ du doch mal, und ich habe gesagt ja ich habe mich der Sache angenommen, und die ist richtig gut geworden.”

(Martin, l.42)

This means that during the critical stage at the beginning of the joining process, active involvement does not necessarily entail exerting heavy influence on the party’s policies. But if the young members feel that their activity matters, the party can already start to fulfil their needs.

Additional to ideological congruence and feeling personally relevant, moral incentives were important for some activists. They argued that they did not want to only complain but actually influence politics and that everyone has to be politically active (*Tom, l.8, Martin, l.6*). At this point, the party is the closest opportunity for them to be active but not the only reasonable one. Some also argued that they will become active somewhere else when they think it is time to leave the party. This quote shows that the party can also fulfil a more general need for societal engagement:

“... but I would not stop being involved in society. Well, I would maybe look for something else where I become more actively involved. Well, I often played with the idea of doing it.”

“... aber ich würde nicht aufhören, mich gesellschaftlich zu engagieren. Also, ich würde mir dann vielleicht was anderes holen, wo ich mich aktiver einbringe. Also, ich habe schon oft genug mit dem Gedanken gespielt.”

*(Simon, l.32)*

The investigation of the moral-ideological incentives shows that the young activists have both an ideological commitment to their idea of what the party should be and the feeling for self-efficacy in influencing the party into that direction. At the same time this does mean that the membership may be just temporary, with members staying until the party no longer provides the best environment for political engagement.

### Professional Incentives

The young activists scarcely mentioned professional incentives, and when they did, they did so rather indirectly. This is not surprising given the lack of social acceptance of individual benefits from political activity. The majority of professional incentives that the young activists mentioned was the privileged access to information, party leadership and to well-known politicians. Aspects of career building as part of the motivational setting are visible in indirect references to career paths that the party offers.

Information gathering, also for individual purposes, can be a motivation to join the party. One activist explained how she wanted to get better information about politics so that she could use this information at work as well for herself. Her interest regarding information access was to receive better insider information that would help her judge political topics and know more about political processes. This was essential for her job, which was to counsel local political initiatives:

“And I just wanted to know how the party functions. Because I had an idea how politics functions, how it happens, and how it sometimes happens incredibly, and I just wanted to see how it functions within a party, well, how it is managed from the inside.”

“Und ich wollte einfach nur wissen, wie funktioniert die Partei. Weil, ich habe mir schon ein Bild gemacht, wie die Politik funktioniert, wie das so abläuft, wie das auch manchmal krass abläuft, und wollte mir einfach nur anschauen, wie funktioniert das in einer Partei, also wie wird das von innen dann sozusagen gesteuert.”

*(Julia, l.8)*

This is an example of an incentive where the party membership provides the access to a learning environment. This case can be connected back to the relevance of resources for party membership, but in different way. Here, the perceived lack of resources influences the joining of the party.

Individual benefits are not necessarily known among potential party members before they join, but they can also come up as an by-product of party membership when the

young member already joined and started to find a place in the organisation. It was a surprising experience for one young activist when visited the youth organisation for the first time, where he was suddenly exposed to a group of young people that thoroughly discussed political issues. For him the party offered access to information about political actors and decision-making on the local level which he was not aware of before but which he emphasised as a big benefit after learning about it (*Martin, l.6*).

The influence of privileged access to politicians that a party might provide seems to be limited to the very beginning of the joining process, but the reality can also be difficult to contend with. Getting to know politicians and the party leadership motivated some of the activists during their earliest days in the party, but this positive attitude towards politicians and leadership can vanish later, as another activist described when she said she felt neglected and not taken seriously by the leadership after she got to know some leaders during events (*Sarah, l.46*).

The social pressure against expressing any kind of individual career motivation became apparent when some young activists discussed opportunities to offices or mandates that the party offers always indirectly. They referred very generally to career paths in the party. They expressed either very critical stances towards the time it takes to get a chance to get elected into a position or they criticised election mechanisms that make it difficult to get elected as an outsider (*Kay, l.34, Paul, l.34*). They expressed a certain interest in taking such a way but considered potential problems at the same time. These indirect references confirm that individual benefits are not rationalised as a joining motivation by young members, but they do matter for them.

The analysis of professional incentives shows that these aspects are not dominant among the young party members when they rationalise their joining of the party. The individual benefit of information can be important when the members have no previous knowledge about parties and seek to change that. Career ambitions are not clearly expressed, although for some members such an individual benefit certainly plays a role despite expressing it rather latently.

## Social Incentives

The social incentives that the young activists mentioned are in between the moral-ideological and the professional incentives in terms of their relevance to the young activists. They cover two aspects: enjoying political activities by meeting like-minded others through the party and finding a place for them in the party where they do not have to compromise over their ideology.

The activists described how they sought to meet like-minded others, both to get new perspectives from people they associated with and to spend time with people sharing similar interests. One activist emphasised that this like-mindedness did not depend on age but on similarity of interests (*Simon, l.8*). Another stressed how she wanted to get to know the people in the party before she decided to join (*Christine, l.16*). The open phase of taking part in political activities before actually joining the organisation allows for that. The importance of like-minded others was emphasised by one activist who reported how he felt alone as a young person among the older fellow party members and how he encouraged a friend to join him:

“... I learned that another young person had joined the party. And since only two districts belong to the local chapter and both of them not very large and that person had to be in my age, I asked who that was. Well, then it turned out that it was an old friend from ... primary school. Then I approached him and asked him to go there together, so you are not alone, and so on, meaning, that you do not completely feel like an alien there.”

“... habe ich dann mitbekommen, dass noch ein anderer junger Mensch in die Partei eingetreten ist. Und da der besagte Ortsverein nur zwei Stadtteile umfasst, die nicht sehr groß sind, und der auch irgendwie mein Alter sein musste, habe ich dann mal irgendwann mal nachgefragt, wer das denn sein kann. So, dann hat sich rausgestellt, dass das ein alter .. Grundschulfreund war. Dann habe ich ihn angehauen, dass wir mal zusammen dahingehen, dann ist man nicht alleine, und so weiter, halt ein bisschen quasi, dass man nicht so vollkommen fremd ist, ja?”

(*Martin, l.6*)

While some activists related the like-mindedness mainly to similar interests, this quote shows that the loneliness of young people in an ageing party plays a role in the beginning of party membership. In this case it did not prevent the member from joining, but it was important for him in coming back after his first visit. The social aspect of like-minded others can stabilise party membership, as is seen in this case.

Enjoying political activities was an important social motivator for the young activists. They enjoyed that they can be part of a social group during events (*Christine, l.20*). This includes their emphasis on the relevance of events for their party activity and their



motivation to continue or not. One activist explained that he knew he liked political discussions and being involved in a political process, which he knew from being a student activist before (*Peter, l.18*). This motivated him to join the party because he graduated from university and his student activism ended.

Meeting like-minded people is not as important in the very beginning of the joining process, but it becomes more important during early activism. Some young activists spoke about "friends" they found during their activism in the party (*Julia, l.58*). This could be especially important for mobile young people who change living places more often, but, as long as they stay in the country, have a meeting point to start from. Although not directly related to the joining as such, one activist approached the party youth section immediately for contacts in his new university city after moving (*Simon*). Meeting the right people (like-minded, but also in terms of age) is important in the beginning to stimulate further activism. It seems somewhat accidental if someone drops in on a local group that they relate positively to, but finding such a local group is important for further activism in the party.

This part of the investigation shows that social incentives are important in attracting and keeping young members in the party. The aspect of finding like-minded others is important for stabilising party membership during joining process. For those who have already experienced politics and know that they like such activities, this social incentive is important in attracting them to the party. Thus, individual backgrounds lead to certain motivations.

The analysis of the incentives for party membership underlines that moral-ideological incentives are the most discussed by the young activists, while professional incentives seem to be reduced to information access and personal contact with politicians. The social incentives, especially the feeling of belonging to a social group, was often not expected before the young activists joined the party, so it is impossible to say that many joined the party because they actively sought like-minded others. But after first contacts, the feeling of belonging to a social group became very important for the fate of the young activists.

## Conclusions

This chapter provides an insight into young activists' rationalisations of their way into the party and shows how they constructed a causal meaning of their joining. The analysis demonstrates that both individual resources and incentives were important during the young activists' way into the party. Resources also somewhat influenced motivations, supporting the idea that joining a mass member organisation must be understood in a way that combines both resource-oriented and incentive-oriented explanations. In that sense, resources are *necessary* to explain party membership, but they cannot explain why people with similar resources make different decisions. When combined with resources, incentives provide the *sufficient* condition for positive decision-making.

The analysis of resources shows the relevance of knowledge and time for membership, while money played only a marginal role for the young activists. Knowledge was the dominating resource for young activists. Those who had knowledge about parties or a personal connection via friends or family could make an educated decision about joining the party. This matches the conventional understanding of the role of knowledge in political participation (Persson 2015, 690). But knowledge also played a role as the young activists' belief in being able to give something back to the party due to their experiences and skills. Individual knowledge about a certain policy issue motivated some young activists only after they joined. They perceived themselves as having special knowledge because they belong to a minority in the party such as being disabled or in vocational training. This self-perception empowered them to become active. The narration of the young activists that related to the impact of knowledge on their joining process reaffirms the important role that resources play in explaining political participation.

The analysis of incentives reaffirms the domination of moral-ideological motivations among the young activists. Their most discussed motivation was the ability to influence politics and contribute to societal change. At the same time, they were aware of the opportunities that the party provided them with to reach that aim. This means that their primary motivation was not an individual one but rather a collective one, or at least they rationalised it that way. The social desirability of these results should not

be underestimated, especially in an interview setting. The indirect references to the problems and difficulties of career paths in the party show that career opportunities were an issue for some of the young activists.<sup>8</sup> The social benefits of the party were mainly expressed by those with previous experience in other political arenas. They already knew that involvement might be a socially enjoyable activity and that they enjoyed politics. These former activists were also those that chose to join the party in order to have better access to political decision-making, which means that they also took other incentives into consideration. It seems that social motivations alone cannot explain why someone joins a party, but social motivations when combined with moral-ideological can explain party membership.

The discussions in the interviews underlined the fact that joining a party is a process. While there is not typical way of joining the party, there are some basic patterns. Some young activists had a history of political activism before they joined the party. They usually considered joining the party for some time and based their decision on the knowledge they acquired during their previous involvement. Others were basically interested because they encountered parties through socialisation mechanisms like family, school, university or even their workplace. These activists often had only little knowledge about the particular opportunities that the party might provide, but they started to develop their motivation during their initial phase of membership. This shows that the young activists were very differently "prepared" for their membership. This connects individual resources and incentives, requiring some further investigation. The connection is discussed in Chapter 6, where it can be tested using a larger data set.

The relation between the different kinds of incentives needs some clarification. It is impossible to confirm different dominating motivations among the young activists. It seems that some activists knew that they might get a social reward from the party while others did not express such a thought. There was no sign of a group that is mostly socially motivated, as they all had also other motivations that drove them. This challenges the assumption that young party members have a dominant motivation and *moral-minded*, *social-minded* and *professional-minded* members (Bruter and Harrison 2009a) can be easily distinguished. This study develops a typology of young party

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<sup>8</sup>This study looks more into this aspect in Chapter 7.

members based on their motivations in Chapter 6 to better understand the relationship between the different sets of motivations.

## Chapter 5

# Understanding Activism in the Party

“For the parties, the in-house pains in the neck are important – Jusos, JuLis or Linksjugend are the playground for political talent, as several party celebrities started their career in the junior section. [...] Now, during the election campaign, young people swarm out towards city squares, festivals and student parties to convince peers of the same age.”<sup>1</sup>

This chapter focuses on the experiences of young party activists during their day-to-day activities. Knowing why young activists join a party is only the first step in understanding the relationship between young people and traditional political parties. In order to fully understand young people’s relationship with the party, how the party shapes them and how they might shape the party in the future, this chapter features an analysis of their perspectives on their party-related experiences. The group of young activists experienced the party organisation regularly during their activities, but so far the literature is sparse in terms of the daily experiences of young activists that will likely shape their future perspectives. This part of the analysis goes beyond their individual motivations and resources for joining the party. It includes the context of the party organisation, while its focus remains on the perspective of the individual young activists within that context.

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<sup>1</sup>Jusos, JuLis and Linksjugend are the names of the youth organisations of the SPD, the Liberal Party F.D.P. and the left party DieLinke. orig. "Für die Parteien selbst sind die hauseigenen Nervensägen wichtig – Jusos, JuLis oder Linksjugend sind die Spielwiese für politische Hoffnungsträger, so mancher Parteipromi startete seine Karriere im Junior-Verband. [...] Jetzt im Wahlkampf schwärmt die Jugend aus, um auf Marktplätzen, Festivals und Studentenpartys Gleichaltrige zu überzeugen." SPIEGEL ONLINE (2013).

After massive declines in membership during the past decades (Mair and van Biezen 2001; van Biezen, Mair et al. 2012), many former mass member parties responded with organisational changes to compensate for the loss of members. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are two influential models, the cartel party thesis and the electoral professional party concept, that illustrate the change of former mass parties into professionalised entities that are the focus of this work (see Chapter 2, section ??). The electoral professional party concept (Panebianco 1988) describes how former mass parties develop into professional campaign machines, focusing on election campaigns and using mass media communication to compensate for the lack of members. The cartel party thesis (Katz and Mair 1995; Katz and Mair 1996) postulates that parties joined forces across the ideological spectrum to compensate for the financial resources from members by driving closer to the state. Both model concepts conclude that former mass member parties have become more centralised, professionalised and oriented toward election results while blurring their ideological orientations.

These changes resulting in more professionalised parties have likely influenced the experiences of party members. As shown in the previous chapter, the young activists had very diverse sets of motivations and backgrounds that made them join the party. But they all shared positive attitudes towards parties and saw an advantage in influencing politics via the party organisation. This makes them a minority among the younger generation. They also had in common that they were not part of the heyday of mass member parties, did not experience the more ideological times in the party and thus also probably agreed with a more pragmatic form of politics that desires compromises to be part of decision-making. As they intentionally chose to join a rather professionalised party, they could be the ideal supporters for these parties and not very critical towards hierarchical organisations.

The demands of professionalised parties might confront these parties with a dilemma. As established in the literature, young people tend to be more ideological and radical than adults, a phenomenon that occurs among young party members as well. In case studies conducted in Germany and the United Kingdom, party youth organisations expressed the party ideology more clearly and were more radical than their mother parties (Krabbe 2001; Lamb 2003; Layton-Henry 1976). When young people tend to

distrust parties and distance themselves from hierarchical political organisations, parties might make concessions to their young members if that means reaching a potential group of voters more easily. If the parties offer space to work differently they may encourage young people who are critical towards the parties to join. But these spaces might make it more difficult to steer the party and show a unified face to the electorate in election times. The young members in such a party are in the centre of this conflict of aims.

The two aspects, the potential bias of a minority with a positive attitude towards hierarchical organisations and the openness of parties to critical members given their shrinking membership, are the two sides that young party members experience in the professionalised party organisation. Although developments in former mass member parties have received a lot of attention in the scholarship (see Chapter 2), an examination of how their young members experience their membership is still missing from the literature. Based on the argument that the professionalisation of parties also influences the role of party members, this chapter adds this particular perspective to the literature and shows how young activists see themselves and how they perceive their role in a professionalised party.

Three aspects guide this analysis of the experience of the young activists. The first aspect examines whether they were a minority among young people in that they did not mind hierarchical politics or they capitalised on the party's need for young faces among its ranks to advance their agendas. In order to analyse this aspect, the young activists were asked about what image of their party they had. The second aspect addresses the impact of party change on the young activists by comparing their experiences to main aspects of the electoral professional party concept and the cartel party thesis. Third, the role of the youth organisation in reaching out to young people and preparing young activists for a party career is investigated.

As in Chapter 4, this analysis is based on in-depth interviews with young party activists. The analysis again uses the perspective of the young activists, using their rationalisations of their experiences as material. The results show that the young activists had a rather critical stance towards their party, but they were pragmatic about their membership. They were torn between their own ideological claims and what they experienced in the reality of professional party organisations, especially the need to

address heterogeneous groups of voters. They expressed that they felt distanced from the party, especially when they disagreed with its policies. But they ultimately had an instrumental view on their membership and accepted the party's electoral focus. Even when they expressed clear ideological convictions, many were willing to compromise for the aim of reaching a greater part of society. For the future of professionalised parties, this means that their young members will not necessarily be solely focused on bringing the party electoral success, but they will also not bring back ideology into the parties.

## 5.1 Influential Factors of Party Experience

The analysis uses qualitative content analysis, applying codes and a coding frame to the data. This part is based on the second part of the overall coding scheme and builds on three main categories: (1) the party image of young party members, (2) party change, and (3) the youth organisation.<sup>2</sup> The three categories provide the context for this analysis of young party activists. The second category was formed deductively, reflecting on knowledge about the two elaborated concepts of party change. The first and third categories were formed inductively from the material due to the scarce knowledge about the impact of party change on party members in general and on young party members in particular.

Each main category is divided into subcategories based on a guiding question for research (Table 5.1). The *party image* category is divided into two subcategories: the *general image* of the party and the *experience of age* in the party. The *party change* category is divided into four subcategories. Two of them are based on the cartel party thesis, *distinctness* and *bureaucratisation* of the party, and two are derived from the electoral professional party concept, *electoral orientation* and *professionalisation* of the party. The category *youth organisation* has two subcategories, *outreach to youth* and *education of future party officials*. This coding scheme provides the structure for the data analysis. It is elaborated in the following section.

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<sup>2</sup>Full coding frame in Appendix A.4. For an elaboration of the data analysis procedure and the coding scheme development, see Chapter 3.



| <i>Main category</i>               | <i>Subcategory (Guiding question)</i>  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Party image of young party members |  |
|                                    | <i>General image of the party</i><br>Are there indications that the young members are partial to hierarchical organisations?                                 |
|                                    | <i>Experiences of age in the party</i><br>Does age play a role in how young members experience the party?  |
| Party change                       |  |
|                                    | <i>Distinctness of the party</i><br>How do young members distinguish between different parties and how do they see their party in relation to other parties? |
|                                    | <i>Bureaucratisation of the party</i><br>How do young members perceive restrictions and bureaucratic tasks?  |
|                                    | <i>Electoral orientation of the party</i><br>How do young members accept the electoral focus of the party?   |
|                                    | <i>Professionalisation of the party</i><br>How do young members experience leadership hierarchies and influence in the party?                                |
| Youth organisation                 |  |
|                                    | <i>Outreach to youth and electoral support</i><br>How do young members experience opportunities to transmit youth interests into the party?                  |
|                                    | <i>Educating future party officials</i><br>How do young members understand the role of the youth organisation in providing the party with future leadership? |

**Table 5.1: Coding frame for interview analysis, part 2: Experiencing the party.** Summary of guiding questions and coding scheme for the qualitative content analysis.

## Party Image of Young Party Members

How young people relate to political parties is an important aspect in understanding the future of political parties. People pick up political habits early in their lives, and young party members are likely to stay in the parties and shape their parties' futures (Galston 2001; Hooghe and Stolle 2003; Jennings 1987). This relationship should be influenced by the young members' general attitude to the party, or their party image. I develop

two guiding questions for the analysis of the party image of young party members.

There are good reasons to expect that the young people in general have a relatively negative view of parties. But young party members may be different. Parties today attract young people less than in the past. This does not occur because of a lack of political interests, but today's younger generation tends to reject hierarchical forms of participation (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Inglehart 1990; O'Neill 2001). Young people prefer interest groups to express their disgust with traditional forms of political agency (Cross and Young 2008a; Henn and Foard 2012; Henn, Weinstein et al. 2005). These attitudes might collide with professionalised parties and their demands. While becoming a party member is uncommon among young people, those who joined already have crossed a high threshold. In some cases, young party members were very positive towards their party (Cross and Young 2008a), but other research revealed that they harshly criticised their party's efficacy (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). Given these divergent results, it is necessary to further investigate how young party members, especially those who are relatively active and engaged, perceive their party, as well as whether they are a minority among the younger generation in their attitudes toward the party.

The second aspect of party image focuses on age relations in the party from the perspective of the young members. The interviews revealed that *age* is an important aspect of the young activists' party experiences. This is supported by earlier research in which young members reported tensions between old and young members in their parties (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). The coding frame was constructed inductively in this aspect (Schreier 2012, 84). The two aspects, general image of the party and age relations in the party, are used to analyse how well the young activists fit into the demands of an ageing professionalised party. The two accompanying guiding questions to analyse the party image of young members are:

- Are there indications that the young members are partial to hierarchical organisations?
- Does age play a role for how young party members experience the party?

## Party Change

The aspects related to party change are analysed along the two complementary concepts that explain ideal types of party change: the cartel party thesis and the electoral professional party concept. According to both of these models, political parties have responded to the erosion of their bases by adopting changes that sustain the survival of the organisation. They have compensated for declining financial resources from members by making use of state resources. Their structures have become more professional, employees have compensated for the lacking activists and the parties' new focus has emphasised electoral success over political ideology. Both approaches lead to the expectation that party change has severely impacted the role of party members. Recalling the analytical framework laid out in Chapter 2, I elaborate their potential impact on young party members and develop four guiding questions for the analysis.

The cartel party thesis argues that parties have compensated for declining numbers of members by turning more closely towards the state. This has the potential to influence the role of party members, as it changes the party structures, the relations between party and state and the competition among parties (Detterbeck 2008, 28). According to this model, political parties build a cartel of parties and use their position in the political system to change legislation. This lets them compensate for their lack of finances by using state resources while accepting stricter regulations. The organisational structure of a party in the cartel becomes more tailored towards its leadership. The party also requires efficient working structures and professional employees (Katz and Mair 1995; Katz and Mair 1996). This has the potential to reduce grassroots members of the party to only supporters for campaigns set up by the leadership. The relation between parties and state may also influence the ability of parties to attract members. Stricter regulations on parties can foster negative attitudes towards parties and especially younger generations seem to be more difficult to recruit in highly regulated countries (Whiteley 2011; Whiteley 2014). Regarding party competition, the cartel thesis argues that parties form a cartel to assure access to public subsidies. Parties downplay their ideological differences (Katz and Mair 1995; Katz and Mair 2009). Such developments are likely to diminish the differences between parties, making it difficult to explain the identification

with a certain party as opposed to another one.

The electoral professional party concept argues that party members as multipliers of the party's message are being replaced (Panebianco 1988). Parties compensate for the lack of members by addressing voters primarily during election campaigns, using professional staff and mass media. Parties sell packages of policies based on pollsters instead of promoting an ideologically sound program (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002, 295), and they appeal now to the 'opinion electorate' instead of the 'electorate of belonging' (Panebianco 1988). The professionalisation of parties has influenced inner party democracy: Decision-making in electoral professional parties has shifted from the mid-level elite to the leadership and the headquarters, as modern mass media requires direct and quick responses. At the same time, formal rights of the rank-and-file members have been extended (Bukow 2013a; Farrell and Webb 2002; Poguntke and Webb 2005). This extension of rights only superficially emphasises inner party democracy, as this development strengthened the party elite since grassroots members are more difficult to mobilize (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Ignazi 2014; Russell 2005b). The electoral professional party seems to be a party for the leadership and those aiming at reaching the echelons leadership rather than for the believers.

According to both models, the domination of the party in public office over the party on the ground has important implications for party members. The party on the ground foremost supports the leadership (Katz and Mair 1995; Katz and Mair 1996). Professionalised parties require members to be mainly uncritical fans of the leadership instead of critical grassroots activists who challenge their leadership on the basis of ideological convictions. Members are important for supportive tasks but should not publicly disagree with the party leadership. This is a much different party organisation than in the previous era of mass member parties. The professionalised parties try to attract new members by expanding rights for grassroots members, but opportunities for inner party influence and step-by-step careers decrease when parties substitute volunteerism with professional employees and when they emphasize public appearance over open discussion. As parties focus on elections, the activities related to elections may become the central issue for party activists. While both models describe ideal types rather than specific empirical realities in one particular party system or party, certain aspects

of these models can be used to analyse how young party members experience recent changes within parties.

It is important to understand how young party members perceive their organisation. They have joined the party after the golden era of party membership and are less likely to relate to the ‘good old times’ of more democratic mass member parties. They made a voluntary decision to join a professionalised party. Knowing how young party members adapt to a professional and campaign-oriented party will allow for the better understanding of whether professionalised parties are confronted with a growing discontent among their members or whether they are attracting those that fit right in with their organisational demands. The guiding questions for the young activists’ experiences with party change are:

- How do young members distinguish between different parties and how do they see their party in relation to other parties?
- How do young members perceive restrictions and bureaucratic tasks?
- How do young members accept the electoral focus of the party?
- How do young members experience leadership hierarchies and influence in the party?

## Party Youth Organisation

The role that the youth organisation plays in young party members’ experiences is the last part of the analysis. There are two relevant strands of literature for the role of youth organisations. One strand examines the relevance of youth organisation activity for political careers from an ex-post perspective by identifying the former activities of current leaders (Gruber 2009a; Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004; Micus 2005). The other strand focuses on the role of youth organisations in encouraging young people to participate (Kimberlee 2002; Mycock and Tonge 2012; Russell 2005a). The two guiding questions are formed out of these two strands of literature.

The ex-post analyses demonstrate the relevance of youth activity for future political careers. In the studies, high-ranking party officials often had a background in the party

youth, and young leaders accelerated their careers because of their youth organisation activities. Party officials also emphasised the networks in the party and how the youth organisation helped them ‘getting to know’ norms and habits in the party (Gruber 2009a). They seemed to be well-prepared as future leaders and staff. The capacity of the youth organisation as a path towards a career in the party is thus important for the future of professionalised parties.

The literature on young people’s engagement stresses the accumulative role played by youth organisations. Youth organisations reach out to the young electorate and accumulate youth interests. They help to encourage activity among young members and turn them from silent into active members (Cross and Young 2008b). However, these activities often require deviating from party positions to adjust to youth interests that are outside the party mainstream. In other words, youth organisations adjust to the demands from critical young members. Therefore, they often serve as radical counterpoint to the mainstream of the party and its leaders, not only in youth-related issues but also beyond (Kimberlee 2002). This internal tension conflicts with the desire of a professionalised party to advertise a clear message of unity to the public.

The youth organisation as a ‘critical friend’ of the party may be no longer helpful in a professionalised party. The youth organisation is needed to reach out to a young electorate, but it should not interfere with campaign strategies. Given this requirement, youth organisations continue to provide a link to the young electorate, but they have a marginal role within the party and little influence on policies (Kimberlee 2002; Russell 2005a). The youth organisations remain a pipeline for future officials, but they run the risk of being limited to a supporter’s group. Based on this assessment, the guiding questions for how the young activists experience the party youth organisation are:

- How do young members experience opportunities to transmit youth interests into the party?
- How do young members understand the role of the youth organisation in providing the party with future leadership?

## 5.2 Experiences of Young Party Activists

The three areas of *party image*, *party change* and the *youth organisation* provide the framework for the analysis of the interviews. Each area was analysed using these guiding questions for coding. Table 5.1 summarises the analytical framework and the guiding questions for this analysis. The analysis discusses the experiences of young activists along the coding frame, starting with the party image, followed by the implications of party change and the youth organisation.

### Party Image of Young Party Members

The analysis of the *party image* of young activists includes two parts: first, how they saw the party in general and second, how they viewed age relations within the party. The first part reveals that the young party activists were by no means only a group with a tendency to support mass membership based organisations. They had a pragmatic relationship to the party, as they valued the access to decision-making that the party possesses. The second part examines how young activists encountered the age differences in the party due to the lack of young people. It confirms that ageing is a persistent issue also from the perspective of the young activists. But the effect of ageing is ambiguous, providing both restrictions and opportunities to engage in the organisation. The party image of the young activists was critical, yet pragmatic.

### General Image of the Party

The young activists' general image of the party was ambiguous. They expressed two different perspectives that differ in their general attitude towards parties. For some activists, the party was the regular and natural place for political activism. However, others decided to become a member out of a pragmatic assessment of power relations in a parliamentary democracy despite having other better opportunities. Both groups had in common that they attributed a decisive role in politics to parties, but they differed in their level of criticism towards such organisations.

For some activists, being a party member was the most natural way for them to be politically active. They emphasised that they wanted to stop complaining about

politics and instead try to influence political decision-making: "Making a fuss about politics does not help a lot, you have to act. The best action is to join a party." <sup>3</sup> (*Tom, l. 8*). This attitude was repeated by other activists: They distinguished themselves from other young people in school or at work who only complain about politics but have never taken any action (*Laura, l.36-38, Sarah, l.36*). That attitude towards the party indicates that for some of the young activists, parties are the regular way of political activism, and they retain a positive attitude towards parties.

The second perspective is far more critical towards parties, and it dominated among the activists. They described the party as a necessary evil in order to change society. For these activists, the party was by far not the only place for political activity and not at all the best one. But parties were the only place where they believed they would be able to change society by changing the party (*Christine, l.36*). Some activists decisively expressed negative sentiments towards the party. They hesitated to support the party, but justified their participation by describing the central role of parties in providing access to political power. One activist explained how she always had to defend her decision to join the party to friends who were more radically left and disliked her membership:

"...well, you have to say yes, I have another opinion. But at the same time, I would always argue that it is about fighting for a left majority in the short term. In the long term, it is of course about fighting for another system, but it is always better to have a social democratically-led government than a conservative government. We are seeing now, with the black-yellow government,<sup>4</sup> how the black-yellow social cutbacks look, and they are obviously more severe than social cutbacks with red-green. Well, so I prefer a red-green government, which at least fights for an open society. Well, that is why it is worth to fight for the SPD at this point, and, at the same time, it is worth it to fight within the SPD. To force the SPD [...] to fight against social cutbacks."

"... du musst halt sagen ja, habe ich eine andere Position. Aber gleichzeitig würde ich das halt auch immer sagen, so es geht halt darum, linke Mehrheiten zu erkämpfen, so erst mal kurzfristig, so langfristig geht es natürlich darum, für ein anderes System zu kämpfen, aber es ist auf jeden Fall immer besser, eine sozialdemokratisch geführte Regierung zu haben als eine konservativ geführte Regierung, wir erleben das ja gerade, mit Schwarz/Gelb, was Kahlschlag auf Schwarz/Gelb bedeutet, und das ist eben nochmal deutlich heftiger als sozialer Kahlschlag unter Rot/Grün. So, und da ist mir natürlich eine Rot/Grüne Regierung, die zumindest immerhin gesellschaftspolitisch für eine offene Gesellschaft kämpft, deutlich lieber. So, und deswegen lohnt es sich auch, erst mal für eine SPD an der Stelle zu kämpfen, und es lohnt sich gleichzeitig in der SPD zu kämpfen, um eben durchzusetzen, dass die SPD sich [...] gegen sozialen Kahlschlag engagiert...."

*Kay, l.36*

<sup>3</sup>orig.: "Viel meckern über Politik hilft nicht viel, man muss auch handeln. Am besten handeln ist, wenn man in eine Partei eintritt."

<sup>4</sup>Reference to the current conservative-liberal government coalition.



This latter group of activists expressed a pragmatically distant relationship to the party. They disagreed on ideological grounds with many decisions of the party, but they argued for the necessity to influence the biggest party on the left in order to be able to influence politics as such (*Christine*, l.46). They can be seen as 'ideological misfits' (van Haute and Carty 2012) on the left, but they confirm the central role of parties in politics. They accepted their role to act within traditional politics. This finding is in line with what distinguished young party members from their same aged non-members in other studies. They believed in their efficacy and generally perceived the party to be a proper place for political influence (Young and Cross 2007).

The investigation of young activists' image of the party reveals very different attitudes and understandings of the party among the young activists but also a joint pragmatism. Even though the activists differed strongly regarding their criticism towards the party, they had similar pragmatic relationships with the party. They all accepted the importance of parties in politics as such and contributed to the party despite regular frustration and ideological disagreements. One activist compared his relationship to the party with the relationship of football fans to their team:

"It is so to speak, if I would allow myself to use the football metaphor, my favourite club, the SPD, and if the club plays badly, you're still a fan and you're always supporting the party. That is how I would see the relevance of the party for me."

"Ist schon quasi, wenn man diese, wenn ich mir die Fußballmetapher quasi erlauben würde, ist das glaube ich mein Lieblingsverein, ist die SPD, und wenn der Verein mal scheiße spielt, dann ist man trotzdem ein Fan und man feuert quasi die Partei immer an, das ist so, würde ich so- die Bedeutung von der Partei sehen für mich.."

*Martin*, l.38

This quotes adds to the analysis of the activists' joining motivations in Chapter 4 and the first insights into milieu ties based on the survey data in Chapter 3. The relationship with the party seems to go beyond a clear ideological attachment, and it allow some conflicts. This sums up the general attitude of the activists. Their dominating view of the party was critical but pragmatic. They tended to see the party as an instrument for influence due to the political system. As long as the political configuration remains the way it is currently with a dominant party in a "left" bloc of the party system, this party seems to be a reasonable place for activism despite negative attitudes towards such a hierarchical organisation.

### View on Age Relations in the Party

Age relations and the experience of age in the party were prevalent in all interviews. While there was little disagreement among the young activists that young people are under-represented in the party and that this is a general problem for the party, the age-related experiences had two distinct tendencies. All interviewees mentioned that they felt lonely due to the small number of young people. Several activists described that they got singled out in the party due to their young age. But the activists perceived that situation very differently. Some expressed that they benefitted from this situation, as they were more visible and received support, while others emphasised the unyielding structures and open antipathy against young people within the party. These different judgments of a similar situation hint at diverging mechanisms in the age relations in a party organisation.

Some activists felt supported by older party members due to the lack of young members in the organisation. Young women especially were quickly elected after they joined as additional delegates to "learn" from the older members (*Laura, l.56*). Some activists argued that the party needed them to attract young voters and this situation supports them in internal elections, as one activist remembered her first election:

"I think, it was like [she is] new, young and we want her to stay here. I think that was it, why they ... suggested me as a candidate, as a delegate."

"Ich glaube, das war eher das Thema, neu, jung, und die wollen wir halten. Ich glaube, das war das Ding, weswegen sie mich auch jetzt so .. als Kandidatin vorgeschlagen haben jetzt als Delegierte."

*Julia, l.24.*

This quote hints at the access to an elected position that the activist was afforded, even though it was only a position as a delegate, and she gained support by being young. The activist felt that the other party members saw the need to offer her something to make her stay active in the party. These young activists experienced age as an advantage that they could use to gain access to party positions.

However, ageing was also described as a negative influence on the young activists. The majority of the activists complained about unyielding structures, boring meetings and open antipathy from older party members. Some of these conflicts seemed to be typical conflicts between new and established members. But the young party activists also faced difficulties due to their age. Some were told to 'sow their wild oats' in the

youth organisation before they came back (*Christine, l.16*), and they learned that no one was concerned with their opinion at local party meetings (*Martin, l.44*). This caused one activist to withdraw from activities due to her frustration (*Julia, l.8*). The activists also talked about the lack of discussion about the habits in a party where the same people have worked together for a long time. Incumbents seemed to stick to their positions and were afraid of young people (*Julia, l.59-60*). Hierarchies were already set and difficult to break, which was associated with the fact that there were no young people, as one activist described:

“The local leader talked about something, then there were some questions, but everything was basically decided already. Well, it was predetermined, nodded through and there was little discussion, little participation and exchange. Well, I came there, and there were no young people.”

“Der Vorsitzende hat was angesprochen, dann gab es ein paar Fragen, aber dann war die Sache eigentlich beschlossen. Also, das was vorgegeben war, wurde abgenickt, und es gab wenig Diskussion, wenig Beteiligung, und auch wenig Austausch. Also, ich bin da hingekommen, und da waren keine jungen Leute. ”

*Simon, l.28*

Besides this criticism of the individual behaviour of other party members, the young activists mentioned structural problems. Some argued that the party had outdated structures and "committees dating back to a time where the SPD had more than one million members"<sup>5</sup> (*Paul, l.28*). Some interview partners felt negatively about the remnants of the past, as they produced structural problems and caused internal fighting about positions that seem unimportant. Both aspects show that the young activists had a negative perspective of their party. This is in line with young people's lack of trust in political parties and does not confirm the claim that young party members are a minority of already inclined and willing supporters.

The party image of the young activists can be summarised as pragmatic, yet critical and rather negatively influenced by age. Their access to decision-making seems to have outweighed their frustration due to ideological distance or unyielding structures. In some cases, ageing seems to have been an advantage for their own career, as it made them visible within the party and potentially valuable as representatives of the party to the outside world. But for many others the experience of being only one of a few young activists was frustrating. Different attitudes towards young members in local

<sup>5</sup>orig.: "wir haben in dieser Partei noch Gremien aus einer Zeit, wo wir über eine Million Mitglieder hatten."

organisations likely influenced their opportunities for participation and their image of the party.

## Party Change

This part seeks to understand if and how the young activists experienced the potential implications of party change. The main tendencies that party change models depict – less ideological distinctness between parties, increased bureaucratic tasks, increased focus on electoral campaigns, and increased centralisation of the organisation – should influence the opportunities of the young activists within the party. This part analyses these four aspects. The results confirm the pragmatic stance towards the party, as the activists attributed the SPD's distinctness largely to its important role in the party system. The results also show that the young activists largely accepted the main tendencies toward the emphasis on electoral success and a strong leadership, even though they were critical about the people in charge.

## Distinctness of the Party

The young activists expressed a rather pragmatic perspective on the distinctness of their party, yet their perspective was still embedded in ideological convictions. They saw strong and general ideological differences between the left and right bloc of parties, and they viewed the CDU as the strongest opponent. But those parties within the left bloc were less distinct for them. The choice for the SPD against other, smaller parties was often the result of disregarding other parties or a strategic decision to join the most relevant party with the best access to government.

The young activists saw a great ideological distinctness between parties when it came to the main political blocs. This is not very surprising, as the fact that they joined the party offers the assumption that they saw something special about their party. An activist expressed his identification with a left bloc of parties by excluding everything else, without really committing himself to the party itself but as a representative of an ideology:

“Maybe once there is another socialist party that is big enough and without which there is no centre-left majority possible. But that is not the question at the moment. Currently there are, I think, relatively few alternatives. The Green Party is no alternative, the Left Party is definitely also no alternative, and there is no need to deal with other parties at all.”

“Vielleicht gibt es eines Tages eine ganz andere sozialistische Partei, die groß ist, und irgendwie ohne die es keine Mehrheiten geben kann links der Mitte. Vielleicht muss man sich dann umentscheiden. Aber das ist im Moment nicht die Frage. Es gibt dazu, glaube ich, gerade relativ wenige Alternativen. Die Grünen sind keine Alternative, die Linkspartei ist es auf jeden Fall auch nicht, und andere Parteien muss man sich gar nicht mit auseinandersetzen,”

*Kay, l.46*

Within this left bloc of political parties, the activist made a strategic decision about which party to join. Some activists said that they thought about the Left Party and the Green Party as well. They chose the SPD because of it aims to be in the government instead of just a protest party. Joining the dominant party on the left instead of one of the smaller parties was based on the belief that any possible centre-left coalition of parties will always include the SPD and the SPD is mainly oriented towards joining the government (*Peter, l.22*). The SPD was also chosen because of the belief that the Left Party is filled with "people who celebrate Joseph Stalin in discussions as a hero of civil liberty"<sup>6</sup> (*Paul, l.14*) and the Green Party is too conservative in general and too hostile towards the industry (*Paul, l.14, Peter, l.22*).

This view of the distinctness of the SPD is two-pronged. While the strategic motives of the young activists add to the claim of young activists' pragmatic relationship their party, it also confirms that there were basic ideological differences between the parties that the young activists maintained. In other words, ideology mattered for the young activists, but they were pragmatic within certain ideological boundaries. They chose the party that seems to offer the most influence, not only personally for them within the organisation but also on the level of the party system.

### Bureaucratisation of Party Work

The interviewed offered no evidence that regulatory issues influenced the activities of the activists, as no interviewee mentioned anything related to bureaucracy and formal tasks within their activities. This is not really surprising because it is in line with previous observations on the effect of regulation intensity: Higher regulation of the

<sup>6</sup>orig.: "Das sind Leute, die in Diskussionsrunden Joseph Stalin als Held der Bürgerrechte feiern"

party organisation is a barrier to recruiting new members, but it has no effect on the retention of members (Whiteley 2011, 36). Those who have already joined a party do not complain about bureaucratic burdens of party activity. The lack of references to this aspect in the interviews shows that even if there were bureaucratic tasks to do alongside party activities, they did not stick out to the activists as an issue when they reflected about their activism.

### Electoral Orientation of the Party

The party's tendency to focus on electoral campaigns was mentioned by the young activists in two different ways. First, their regular activities included participating in elections and campaigns, which proved to be very influential and provided them with a core identity. Second, they thought that the ideology of the party and their own ideological convictions were restricted by vote-seeking and office-seeking aims, but they did not challenge the underlying logic of the party's electoral focus. This shows that they pragmatically accepted the emphasis of electoral success over ideology.

The increasing focus on electoral success influenced the activists in that election campaigns were the dominant party activity that they experienced. Several of the activists joined the party during election campaigns, and many of their activities were related to election campaigns (*Sarah, l.8*). Election campaigns were also seen as the time when to recruit new members because they could be integrated into the party with specific tasks. But some activists saw a downside of this electoral focus. They discussed difficulties in committing volunteers to the party for more than one campaign period (*Tom, l.50-52*). One activist argued that those who were recruited during election campaigns did not remain active after the elections because the day-to-day work between campaigns could not offer similar activities to election campaigning (*Simon, l.32*). Campaigns also interrupted the regular activities of the activists. They became the dominant form of activism at the expense of engagement on the local level:

“We want to do something again next year – last year we skipped it because we were lacking power, maybe because of the election campaign – but we want to do it next year, it is scheduled...”

“Wir wollen jetzt nächstes Jahr wieder was machen, voriges Jahr haben wir das eben ausfallen lassen, weil die Kraft gefehlt hat vielleicht auch, weil Wahlkampf- aber wollen eigentlich nächstes Jahr, ist angesetzt...”

*Tom, l.68*

This means that even if party headquarters apply new forms of campaign activities to mobilise new volunteers and members (Lees-Marshment and Pettitt 2014), this mobilisation is potentially only short term and will not revive a daily engagement in the party. Such impact of the electoral focus is visible among the young activists' experiences.

The young activists criticised the party's dominant focus on winning elections and joining the government as restrictive to the party ideology, but they did not challenge the emphasis on electoral success as such. Their criticism targeted mainly the specific electoral strategies, especially when the party shifts to the centre to address floating voters. Some argued that maximizing votes harms the credibility of the party and betrays its values (*Sarah, l.63-66*). Another activist thought the party campaigns for votes on the left by making electoral promises but ultimately fails to implement these promises after becoming part of the government (*Paul, l.18*). They criticised electoral strategies and proposed other strategies to gain more votes (*Paul, l.20*). However, their critiques did not challenge the party's focus on electoral campaigns and the main aim of maximizing votes as such. Quite the contrary: Some interviewees were convinced that past defeats provided opportunities to change the party and its electoral strategy (*Simon, l.8*), and, for some, such defeats were even the main reason to join the party:

"..the moment of devastation after the disastrous national elections [in 2009, R.W.] somehow seemed to me as the right moment to join. [...] Well, I found it really nice that, because of everything that went wrong, the party was more open. More open to new people, new ideas, and also for a critical discussion about itself. [...] This was a moment where we could say, everybody, we did something wrong. If we had not done something wrong, we would not be punished as much. And there was no way of denying it. [...] and at that time, there were all these conferences in each division where we wanted to talk about how to renew the party, what do we want to do differently, how should we focus on new issues."

"Außerdem schien mir der Moment des am Boden Liegens der Partei nach der wirklich desaströsen Bundestagswahl [2009, R.W.] auch irgendwie ein guter Moment, um beizutreten. [...] Also ich fand das sehr schön, weil natürlich das, was gerade so alles so schiefging, war auch die Partei offener. Offener auch für neue Leute, für neue Ideen, und auch für den intensiven kritischen Diskurs über sich selber. [...] So und das war einfach so ein Moment, da konnte man mal sagen, Leute, wir haben was falschgemacht. Weil wenn wir nichts falschgemacht hätten, wären wir nicht so abgestraft worden. Und es war einfach nicht mehr zu leugnen. [...] in der Zeit gab es dann überall diese Konferenzen, in jeder Gliederung, wo man darüber reden wollte, wie wollen wir uns erneuern, was wollen wir anders machen, wie müssen wir uns inhaltlich neu ausrichten."

*Paul, l.6-8*

The young activists adopted the idea that electoral results serve as benchmark to check party ideology. Historically low results in the federal elections in 2009, provided them even with a crossroad where they saw the chance to reform the party. Despite their

inherent criticism of the party, the young activists fully accepted the focus on election campaigns as the core aspect of the party. Although they were critical about certain campaign strategies, they did not challenge the focus of parties on electoral success at the expense of ideological congruence.

### Professionalisation of the Party

The professionalisation of parties was reflected in the activists' experiences, as they described a sharp differentiation between themselves and the centralised party leadership. They had a clear idea of where they saw themselves within the party structure. They identified with rank-and-file members despite being heavily involved in political activities of the party. Their view on the leadership was negative, even though some of them were part of the mid-level elite as elected officials on the regional level. They mainly criticised individual misbehaviour, not structural mechanisms, which is how they could justify their individual involvement and maintain a critical distance between themselves and those who they perceived as the decision-makers.

Many activists expressed decisively negative views on the leadership. Some felt inferior to those in the leadership, describing themselves as being part of the "lower people"<sup>7</sup> (*Sarah*, l.45-46). They felt that the leadership regularly undermined democratic decisions or withheld information pertinent to being able to influence decisions (*Julia*, l.28). This resulted in frustrating experiences, especially if the activists had to justify the leadership's decisions externally but did not agree with them. This made some of them to consider whether the party was still the right place for them:

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<sup>7</sup>orig.: "niedriges Volk"



“I experienced again and again that the SPD does the opposite of what I expect. Yes, what about...the Hartz legislations, the decision about supporting combat missions,<sup>8</sup> such things, for example, suddenly, the railway is privatised, even though the party congress decided something different. Well, we constantly experience that people do things differently, just because they can do it, because they have the power. And – of course I ask myself whether I am right here, or if it is worth fighting here at all... And, if it is worth at the moment to fight for socialist majorities in the SPD at all.”

“So, oder auch immer wieder erlebt, dass die SPD genau das Gegenteil tut von dem, was ich von ihr erwarte. Ja, was jetzt .. die Hartz-Gesetzgebung ganz am Anfang war, was die Entscheidung zu einzelnen Kriegseinsätzen war, was ... solche Sachen waren wie irgendwie, dass plötzlich die Bahn privatisiert wurde, obwohl der Parteitag was anderes beschlossen hatte. So, man erlebt ständig, dass irgendwelche Dinge irgendwie einfach von Einzelpersonen einfach anders gemacht werden, weil sie es halt können, weil sie halt irgendwie Macht haben. Und das- natürlich fragt man sich dann, ob man hier richtig ist, oder ob es sich hier lohnt zu kämpfen, so. Ja, und ob es .. im Moment überhaupt möglich ist, in der SPD für sozialistische Mehrheiten zu kämpfen.”

*Kay, l.46*

The quote reveals interesting insights, as the examples given by the activist show her/his misconceptions. The decision to reform the welfare state system in terms of the Hartz legislation was not a sole decision of the party leadership. It got approval by the party congress, but at a very late stage where the party in office, the SPD-led government, had already made important steps towards such a reform. An oppositional party congress decision would have challenged the government. To avoid such a decision then-Chancellor Schröder connected his person to the decision and left little room for the congress (Hassel and Schiller 2010, 270-74). The young activist’s criticism should have focused on whether it is possible to influence the party in government instead of complaining about single actors overthrowing party decisions. But despite this misconception, the activist’s impression was that s/he could not exert influence on the actions of the SPD in the governing coalition. The example demonstrates the general problem of potential conflicts between the party in public office and the party on the ground, and it shows that even this group of young activists inclined to party organisations mistrusted in party elites.

Young activists found the selection process for positions to be very problematic. They were concerned about the selection of leadership (*Simon, l.38*). It seemed unclear to them who was selected and why. The interviewees felt they lacked influence on and information about the leadership during the selection process. One woman emphasised

<sup>8</sup>The Hartz legislations changed the German welfare system significantly. The legislative reforms were adopted and put into practise between 2002-2005 during a coalition between the SPD and the Green party. The same coalition also decided that the German Federal Army joins the NATO military operation against Yugoslavia in 1999 and the war on terror after September 11th 2001. All these decisions were heavily disputed in the party organisation.

her difficulties to get into that decision-making club of “two or three guys drinking beer” (*Christine*, l.20). The activists generally saw promotion to higher ranks mainly for those who were very uncritical and had good networks. The amount of time resources available also seemed very important for becoming a leader (*Julia*, l.42, *Peter*, l.30). On the lower levels, the young activists perceived it as necessary to hold negotiations and comply with “deals” to have influence in the party.

The young activists who were already elected to the mid-level elite complained that they always had to comply with the mainstream opinion in the mid-level leadership or were silenced. A general critique was that only uncritical followers of the incumbents had chances for a career in the party (*Paul*, l.34). An activist in a mid-level positions experienced pressure when he did not comply with official policies while being part of the local leadership (*Paul*, l.26). Another activist felt attacked during party events after he challenged what local party leaders had said on behalf of the local youth section. For him, this was a reason to consider leaving the party:

I drafted a press release, [...] and we discussed it in the group, and then we relased the press release, [...]. And then there was a huge reaction, the I was identified with the press release, and the said local politicians, [...] acted out of vanity and verbally attacked me at several events, and I was also slandered at member assemblies. Ich hatte eine Pressemitteilung geschrieben, [...] und innerhalb der Gruppe haben wir darüber diskutiert, und dann gab es dazu eine Pressemitteilung, [...]. So und dann gab es ein Riesenecho, dass dann diese Pressemitteilung meiner Person immer gleichgesetzt wurde, und die besagten Ortspolitiker, [...] gekränkte Eitelkeiten ausgelebt haben, und mich auf mehreren Veranstaltungen immer vor den- oder auch bei Mitgliederversammlungen auch immer verbal attackiert haben, mich auch runtergemacht haben...<sup>9</sup>Martin, l.46

The young activists had a strong tendency to identify with the party on the ground and rather than the leadership, but they did not attribute a lot of power to the party on the ground. All identified with rank-and-file members and not with the leadership, even though some had leadership positions in the mid-level elite, either in the youth organisation or in the party. Some described unyielding hierarchies and argued that the leadership acted against decisions of the party congresses when in the government

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<sup>9</sup>Issue of conflict deleted to guarantee anonymity.

(*Tom, l.24*). The activists saw the leadership as being far away from local sections and rank-and-file members (*Tom, l.48, Sarah, l.32*). The young activists thought that rank-and-file members benefitted from being a party member by getting information and being in contact with politicians, but overall, the party structures did not seem to be a good fit for including rank-and-file members. Many thought they lacked influence in decision-making. This is in conflict with the young activists' pragmatic aim to join a party in order to change society, since in many cases the young activists did not believe they had any influence to change the party and thus change society.

### The Role of the Youth Organisation

Both roles of the youth organisation – accumulation of youth interests and preparation for a party career – were apparent in the interviews. The youth organisation served the activists as the place where they formulated youth interests within the party, sometimes against the party mainstream. It was also a safe space for young activists in two ways: in the youth organisation, they could prepare for future party activities and learn how the party works. But they also used the youth organisation as an escape in times of disagreement with the party. The latter shows the ambiguous role of the youth organisation, either preparing activists for further activity in the party and alienating the activists from the party.

### Transmission of Youth Interests

The role of the youth organisation in organising youth interests within the party had two different facets in the interviews. Some activists emphasised the need for inner party corrections that push the party to the left and provide a space for a more left-wing party ideology. But the majority of activists believed that the youth organisation reaches out to the young electorate by mainly engaging in youth-related areas that the party neglects. Both perspectives conflicted with the view that the youth organisation exerts only little power in the party to influence policies.

Few young activists argued that the youth organisation has the role of a progressive faction in the party. They demanded to be a political actor within the party, focusing on all policy issues (*Kay, l.26-28*). Their connection to youth interests was that they

expect young people to be more progressive and open and that they should bring that into the party. One activist expected the youth organisation to do the following:

“...[the youth organisation will] campaign for those issues that are relevant for the youth, and where the old generation, the SPD in general, is not very critical there, [...] and the Jusos are pioneers in that sense and says: you could do that differently.”

“...dass die sich halt für Sachen einsetzen, was die Jugend auch betrifft, und wo vielleicht die ältere Generation, also die allgemeine SPD dann nicht so kritisch ist, [...] und da sind die Jusos halt schon ein bisschen Vorreiter, dass man da sagt ja, das könnt ihr vielleicht auch anders machen.”

*Laura, l.30*

The youth section was perceived as being more interested in civil society activities. It was also seen as better connected to progressive movements, such as anti-racism initiatives (*Kay, l.30*). This enabled the youth organisation to be the “spin doctor” for the party itself (*Kay, l.26*).

The majority of the activists, however, expressed a different view about the youth organisation. Most young activists wanted the youth organisation to cover education and youth culture (*Martin, l.44*) as well as post-materialist topics such as anti-racism and feminism which they saw as lacking from the party overall. The lack of these post-materialist topics was seen as a major ideological difference between the party and the youth (*Kay, l.48*). Activists mentioned that these areas were more relevant for the youth organisation than the party. Several activists emphasised conflicts about these issues within the party. They perceived themselves as the unheard members who have these issues in mind. This created an impression of the youth organisation as a neglected expert in the party, as one activist described:

“I believe that the biggest annoyance for me, in the relationship with the party, is that it is obviously expected from the Jusos; if they want something, they always have to prove themselves again and again. [...] the party should know that, if they work on education policies they should actively approach the youth organisation. They could approach the youth organisation and say, you are the young people, you work intensively on that, give us some ideas what you think about that issue and we can see how to work on it. My impression is that this never happens. The party just starts doing something and the youth organisation has to intervene and to work like hell to be heard. The relationship could actually be different.”

“Ich glaube, das größte Ärgernis, das ich habe, im Verhältnis zu der Partei ist, dass man von Jusos offensichtlich erwartet, dass sie sich jedes Mal, wenn sie etwas wollen, neu beweisen müssen. [...] mag der Partei auch vorher klar sein, dass sie, wenn sie sich zum Beispiel mit der Frage Bildungspolitik auseinandersetzen, dass sie ja mal tatsächlich von sich aus auf die Jusos zugehen könnten, sagen so passt mal auf, ihr seid doch die jungen Leute, und ihr macht das doch intensiv, gebt uns doch mal eure drei Stichpunkte, und wir gucken mal, wie wir damit arbeiten können. Sondern mein Eindruck ist immer, das passiert grundsätzlich nie, sondern die SPD macht immer erst mal, und irgendwann müssen dann die Jusos einschreiten, wenn es mal wieder nicht so läuft, wie sie sich das vorstellen, und sich zu Tode arbeiten, um irgendwie gehört zu werden, wo das Verhältnis eigentlich ein anderes sein könnte.”

*Peter, l.56*

To transform youth interests into party policies, the youth organisation would need the acceptance of the party organisation. Some activists emphasised a strong connection between the youth organisation and the party, which helps to get policies accepted in the party (*Christine, l.32*). But others experienced that the youth organisation faces strong opposition if it challenges party positions (*Julia, l.34*). As a result, some youth activists even refrained from official party structures to avoid tension:

“Because I think it is not good to be active in the party as a youth organisation official, as much as I dislike this word. Because you get into problems. Because, if you are in a SPD committee, on a certain level, it is expected that you are loyal. Well, and then you have to be apologetic if you have a different position as a youth activist.”

“Weil ich auch glaube, dass es nicht gut ist, als Juso-Funktionär, so doof ich das Wort finde, auch in der SPD zu aktiv zu sein, weil man oft dann Probleme bekommt. Weil, wenn man zum Beispiel in meinem SPD-Gremium ist, auf einer gewissen Ebene, dann wird einfach eine gewisse Treue erwartet. Also, dann und man muss sich dann dafür rechtfertigen, dass man als Juso andere Positionen vertritt.”

*Paul, l.22*

From this perspective, the youth organisation appears almost like a distinct organisation. Some activists withdrew from party activities after they experienced conflicts. The youth section provided them with a protected environment within the party where they could express their diverging opinions. Young activists described the youth organisation as an area for activities directed towards young people and as a kind of *safe space* for ideological “misfits” who do not agree with the party mainstream and want to be “a bit of a revolutionary”<sup>10</sup> (*Sarah, l.20-22*). Some activists described sharp divisions between the party and the youth organisation and considered leaving the party after reaching the age limit for the youth section (*Kay, l.48, Sarah, l.42*). In one case, the youth organisation was even seen as completely disconnected from the party, as one activist said:

“But I could also live without the party. Well, for me, things like the Jusos are more important.”

“Aber ich könnte auch ohne die Partei leben. Also, da finde ich dann solche Dinge wie bei den Jusos schon .. wichtiger.”

*Martin, l.38*

The transmission function of youth interests into the party was important for the majority of the young activists, although their understanding of such a function differs. The youth organisation provided them with a space to discuss youth-related issues as well as other issues, and it offered the opportunity to go beyond the opinions in the party.

<sup>10</sup>orig. “einfach Revoluzzer sein”.

The young activists rated the acceptance of the youth interests in the party as rather low, but this does not decrease the relevance of the youth organisation. The space is important for integrating potential "outliers" who disagree with the party mainstream, at least as long as they are young enough to engage in the youth organisation.

### Educating Future Party Leaders

The activists experienced the youth organisation as a space for learning in two different ways that might cause conflict within the youth organisation. Some saw the activities in the youth organisation as preparation for future party activities and as an opportunity to build a career. At the same time, the activists viewed the youth organisation as the area where young members could learn by trial and error and develop their own political identity. Conflicts may arise when career preparation enforces rather supportive behaviour towards the party leadership while the development of political identities requires distinction between personal views and the leaders' views.

The recruiting function of the youth organisation seemed to work well. Activists explained the effects of youth organisation activity on their relationship with the party. Youth organisation activities prepared the activists for party activism, as it provided the chance to practise mechanisms of the party organisation. The young activists learned "how to use tricks" for gaining influence in decision-making. They learned to act strategically within the organisation (*Peter, l.60*), and they got information about politics and decision-making (*Julia, l.22*). Their experiences in the youth organisation also taught them how to handle frustration, which was seen as important for further party activities:

"Well, I know that it really helps to have a background in the youth organisation if you are active in the party because you have burnt your fingers several times so you don't get angry about it any more. Well. This is the effect of wear and tear. And my impression from bigger events is that – I mean party congresses for example – that people who went through the work of the Jusos... they understand how such an event proceeds much better than people who never did that, who came directly into the party organisation. Because, really, this character, to be able to learn by trial and error, this does not exist in the party organisation."

"Also, ich weiß, dass eben Juso-Vergangenheit extrem hilft, wenn man Parteiarbeit macht. Weil man bei den Jusos oft genug vor Wände gelaufen ist, und sich nicht mehr ärgern muss, also und da so ein bisschen einfach der Abnutzungseffekt einschreitet. Und zumindest mein Eindruck auf größeren Veranstaltungen ist, also jetzt Parteitage oder so was, dass Leute, die Juso-Arbeit gemacht haben, viel eher verstehen, wie so eine Veranstaltung abläuft, als Leute, die das noch nie gemacht haben, die irgendwie direkt in diese Parteiarbeit eingestiegen sind, weil dieser ja tatsächlich- dieser Charakter, Dinge auch einfach mal auszuprobieren, und sie direkt schiefgehen lassen zu können, das gibt es halt auf Parteiebene nicht."

*Peter, l.58*

The experimental space for preparation for ‘real politics’ was criticised by other activists. Some activists wanted to keep their distance from those who they perceived as careerists by the way "they present themselves" (*Simon, l.16*). This different attitudes towards the preparation function of the youth organisations supports the assumption that conflicts between potential career seekers and The preparation function of the youth organisation can also be interpreted differently. Activists emphasised how they learned to develop political arguments and increased their political knowledge through the activities of the youth organisation more generally (*Christine, l.36*). The youth organisation offered the opportunity to develop arguments without the necessity of decision-making and political action:

“Because sometimes it is somehow more important to develop your own argument than voting on an issue. Well, you have to learn for yourself how to develop an argument before you can advocate an opinion. And that is one important thing that we do.”

“Weil, eine eigene Position zu entwickeln ist manchmal irgendwie wichtiger, als irgendwie darüber abzustimmen. Also man muss ja erst mal für sich selbst lernen, wie man eine Position entwickelt, bevor man irgendwann dann für eine stehen kann. Und das ist irgendwie auch eine wichtige Sache, die wir machen.”

*Christine, l.36*

This type of a learning space does not necessarily prepare activists for a future party career, but it adds to the personal development of the activists, no matter if that is useful later on in their careers in the party.

The descriptions of the activists’ experience in the youth organisation show that some activists liked that they youth organisation prepared them for politics and gave them opportunities to learn how to act in the party but also become a politically aware citizen in general. Others preferred to have a safe space within the party organisation where they could discuss among like-minded others without too much interference from the party. This went as far as some activists perceiving the youth organisation as being very distinct from the party. They mainly identified the youth organisation as a separate entity. For the party, that may imply that activists in the youth organisation are not necessarily future party activists and that there is already a division between those seeking a future career and other, more unstable members.

## Conclusions

This chapter analyses young activists' experiences within the party instead of examining their motivations for joining. The interviews revealed that this group of highly active young party members had a critical and distant but also pragmatic relationship with their party. They perceived the party mainly as an instrument to bring about social change. Given the findings about the distance of young people from political parties, it was expected that young party members were a minority group that is inclined towards top-down organisations. But this analysis shows that even the young activists were rather distant to the party. Many had an instrumental relationship with the party: They wanted to influence politics and saw the party as a necessary tool for this task. They hoped to change the party for better. The party's ageing process was also very apparent to them, but the young activists judged this development differently. Some felt supported by older party members who saw the need for "fresh blood" in the organisation, but for many, the party seemed to be an old and opaque organisation. The experiences of young activists show that they all started with a strong motivation to use the party for their political activities and goals, but only some of them fit neatly into the professionalised party.

The dominant goal of the young activists was to change the party for better. Changing the party would require that the activists had influence within the organisation. The activists' sense of their role does not suggest much influence. They identified with the rank-and-file members and were very critical of the party leadership. But they accepted the party's emphasis on electoral success and the professionalisation of the organisation. Their criticism was directed at the electoral strategies and leadership personnel of the party, not towards the structures as such. The young activists criticised the individual incumbents for what they did. It seems that the organisation shaped its members: These young activists will not bring back the ideological mass member party. Disagreement with their leadership manifested in a loose connection with the party and was formulated as a potential reason to leave the party. This does not correspond well with their aim to exert influence on political decisions through the party.

The relationship between the young activists and the party was instrumental but not



without ideological orientation. They knew that they would disagree often with what the organisation did, but they believed that they needed to accept the party's actions as the central role of the party in the party system. This means that possible shifts in the party system may also influence how the party can attract young members in the future. If the party is able to remain a political alternative and build a government coalition, this might compensate for day-by-day frustration. At the same time, the young activists' dominant aim of change was to shift the party more to the left, usually associated with the fight against social cutbacks. This shows that their instrumental perspective did not come without an ideological background; it was embedded in their political ideas and goals.

The youth organisation was a compensation mechanism for some activists who were frustrated by their experiences in the party. They found their space among like-minded others in the youth organisation. Such a role of the youth organisation could provide the party with a link to young people who are close to the party but not in agreement with its mainstream policies and activities. Such a linking function of the youth organisation would require that at least in the long term, the 'outliers' find a way to influence the party to some extent. Whether this is possible is outside the limitations of this study, but the young activists' rather critical assessments of the party mechanisms raises doubt about their ability to later exert such an influence.

The youth organisation seems to play a mixed role for the young activists. It provided a space for two groups with potentially different interests: ideological 'misfits' who disagreed with party policies and decisions and those who wanted to prepare for future careers and were likely to accept the party organisation as it is. There may be potential conflicts within the youth organisation in the future when these two groups have different ideas about how much the youth organisation should criticise and be a "pain in the neck" of the party. It is most likely that the career seekers will remain and find their way into the party structures while the others may potentially leave, at least when they grow too old for the youth organisation. In the interviews, some in the latter group openly questioned their membership beyond the age limit for the youth organisation, indicating that the space the youth organisation provides can even encourage later estrangement from the party.

The results of the analysis of the interviews challenge arguments about the stability of party membership. If young members are ready to join a party but then think to leave once they grow too old for the ‘playground’ of the youth organisation, recruiting party members becomes a different issue for parties. They cannot expect that those joining as adolescents will remain members as adults. Parties that want to attract young members need to accept that many are rather critical towards the party and that they might leave again if they do not gain influence in the party. They might not always be the supportive and cheering members that campaigners in professionalised parties are looking for. However, there seems to be also some young members who are looking for a political career no matter the ideological circumstances. They are less critical about the party and perceive their youth as a period of training. From the perspective of the party headquarters, it is probably more pleasant to work with those conforming careerists. But that strategy has serious implications: If party careers are only possible for those who are obedient, then they are the ones that gain access to political power. Other members, probably those more critical, might be short-term supporters of the party. If they do not get influence in the organisation due to their criticism they will not provide the party with a stable base. Such party gets more elitist as it loses a stable membership base. The foundation of that development is already laid among the youngest members of the party.

Quantitative part

## Chapter 6

# Motivational Groups of Young Party Members

“What the Munich branch of the SPD currently experiences can be called a 'Martin Schulz effect'. Sometimes it may be even a belated Trump effect. Fatos Gashi has mentioned the elections in the U.S. as his motivation [to join the party]. He sent in his membership application before Christmas, but there was some delay. The student has been torn between SPD and the Green Party for some time, but then a colleague finally convinced him.”<sup>1</sup>

Fatos Gashi, the student mentioned in the quote above, displays several characteristics of joining a party that were discussed in the previous chapters. His motivations, such as the general political situation and a new party leader, are combined with a previous interest in joining the party and the influence of a colleague. As discussed in Chapter 4, it was common for some of the young activists to spend some time between first thinking about becoming a member and finally deciding to join the party. This chapter shifts the focus from the special group of young activists and to the whole group of young party members. The analysis in this chapter uncovers an incentive-based typology among the young members and highlights how these motivational settings are

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<sup>1</sup>Orig. "Martin-Schulz-Effekt nennt man das wohl, was die Münchner SPD da gerade erlebt. Wobei manchmal auch noch ein verspäteter Trump-Effekt durchschlägt. Fatos Gashi etwa nennt als seine Motivation ganz klar die Ereignisse in den USA, sein schon vor Weihnachten gestellter Mitgliedsantrag hatte sich verzögert. Der Student war lange Zeit zwischen SPD und Grünen hin- und hergerissen, hat sich dann aber von einem Kollegen überzeugen lassen." Süddeutsche Zeitung Online (2017)

influenced by the members' individual resources, just as the introductory quote shows.

Based on the literature on membership in mass member parties, both individual motivations and structural conditions, such as the resources that an individual possesses, influence the decision to become a party member. The interview analysis in Chapter 4 confirms these two arguments. The chapter also shows that resources and incentives are often connected: Knowledge about the party and about politics as well as personal networks might lower the "threshold" of joining a party and make it more likely that someone may become a member despite a lack of individual motivation. The opposite is true as well: Not possessing enough knowledge can even be a reason for joining a party in order to counterbalance this lack. This connection between resources and incentives is not surprising, but so far sufficient data about the interrelation is missing. This chapter seeks to fill this gap. It combines an analysis of the young party members' incentives for joining with data on their resources. Two questions lead this investigation. First, how are party membership incentives interrelated? Second, how do individual resources influence incentives? The analysis that examines these questions empirically connects the two most important strands of literature on party membership.

The two classic explanations of party membership are incentive- and resource-based explanations. Incentives refer to the benefits that someone expects to gain from becoming a member. In this analysis, an individual's incentives are identified based on their responses to the question: "How important was this aspect for you when joining the party?" These incentives measure what motivated a member to join the party. Such motivations can be grouped into *moral-ideological*, *professional* or *social incentives* (Chapter 4). Empirical applications of this concept revealed that young activists had a dominant set of incentives in joining the party, allowing for their grouping into ideologically- , socially- , or professionally-motivated members (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 30-39). Resources on the other hand refer to the time, money, and skills an individual has (Brady et al. 1995). The better people are equipped with these resources, the more likely it is that they participate in politics. Some studies showed that educational resources advanced those with more skills in terms of party membership (Biehl 2006; Klein 2006; Persson 2014). However, longitudinal analyses revealed that differences in resources between party members and non-party members shrank, and party

members became more heterogeneous (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010). This is important for differentiating the understanding of joining parties: If there is a heterogeneity of party members, how do their resources influence their individual motivations?

This analysis addresses two shortcomings within the knowledge about party membership. First, the empirical analyses of incentives have focused so far on the relationship between different types of incentives, but they have not yet applied a case-oriented focus. The threefold structure of moral, social and professional incentives (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 30-39) revealed a latent structure of motivations, but its methodological approach, factor analysis, could not grasp the differences between the individual members. It is not yet understood whether these latent structures are the same for all members or the pattern of incentives is different across members. Therefore, this work applies latent class analysis to identify groups among the members based on the incentives they consider as important. These groups are called motivational groups. Second, despite the broad knowledge about incentives and resources, these incentive-based and resource based explanations have not yet been combined empirically. The interviews with young activists showed that both incentives and resources influenced their decision to join the party and that their resources affected their motivations. The second step of the analysis further examines the connection between resources and incentives among the broader group of all young party members. It includes different resources as independent variables in a latent class regression model to analyse how they influence different groups of members.

Latent class analysis is a statistical method that identifies unobserved subgroups within a population. It applies statistical information to identify a number of classes with similar characteristics that best fit the data. It estimates the probabilities of class membership and conditional probabilities of item response with given class membership. Latent class models can be generalised with covariates and thus analyse the influence of independent variables on class composition. The first applications of latent class analysis in political science occurred in the mid-1980s (McCutcheon 1985), but scholars have increasingly utilised latent class analysis, especially in studies on political participation and democratic attitudes (Hooghe and Oser 2015; Hooghe and Oser 2016; Hooghe, Oser and Marien 2014; Oser et al. 2013; Weerts et al. 2014). For the analysis of joining

motivations, such a case-centred approach allows for the identification of groups within the population of young party members and to analyse the resources' influence on their motivational setting.

This chapter aims to identify different groups of young party members and define the characteristics of these groups. The results of this chapter show that there are three different groups of young party members. A motivational group has a distinct set of incentives they consider important for their party membership. The dividing lines do not follow the well-known trichotomous structure of moral-ideological, social and professional incentives. The first group of members has a very diverse set of motivations, covering moral-ideological, social and professional incentives. The second group of members disregards professional motivations but has moral-ideological and social motivations. The third group is not motivated by these known incentives. These results confirm the need for a case-centred empirical analysis of joining motivations. The inclusion of resources in the analysis confirms the relationship between resources and incentives and highlights that different prior experiences with politics lead to different motivations. The duration of party membership also seems to impact the motivations of party members. The results show that it is necessary to broaden the understanding of motivations for party membership.

## 6.1 Latent Class Modelling of Motivational Groups

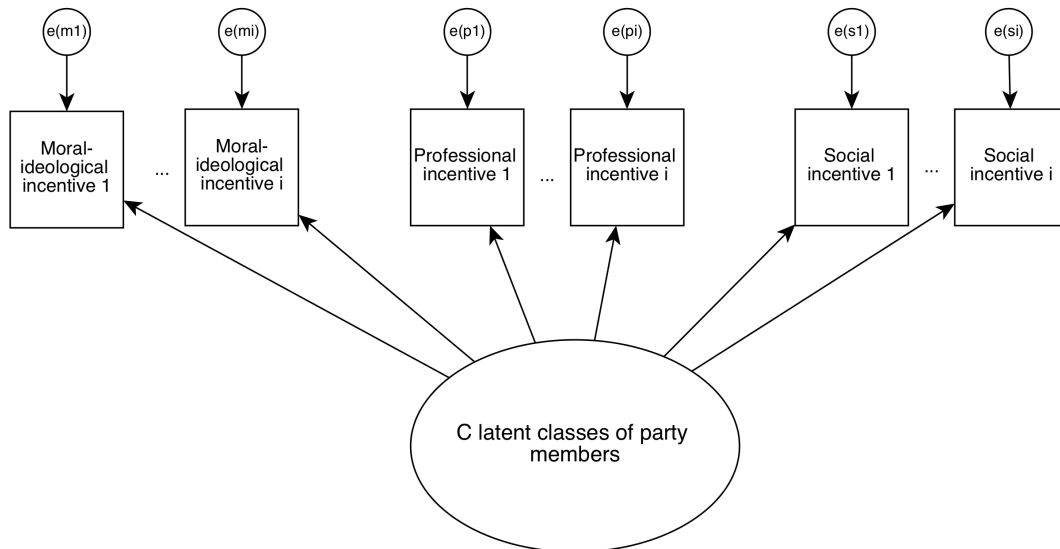
The analysis uses data from an online survey of young party members in the SPD in order to examine their reasons for joining the party. I develop a basic latent class model to identify groups of young party members based on the importance they attributed to typical incentives for party membership in the survey. This basic model is generalised in the second step. The generalised latent class regression model allows for the investigation of the influence of independent variables, which measure different types of resources, on class membership.

Using latent class analysis to identify groups in a population has several advantages over other approaches to latent variable modelling. Unlike factor analysis, a latent class model does not perceive the latent variable as a continuum with different dimensions

that is equally distributed among all cases but instead allows for the identification of distinctive groups of people who are most similar according to the measured indicators. The analysis focuses on relationships between cases, not between variables. Contrary to traditional cluster analysis approaches that also focus on the relationship between cases, latent class models can be selected by objective goodness-of-fit statistics and allow for a straightforward statistical approach to decision-making (Masyn 2013). Therefore, this approach is well-suited for the analysis of whether theoretical groups, such as ideologically motivated, socially motivated and professionally motivated party members, exist based on a probabilistic model (Collins and Lanza 2013).

### Identifying Groups: The Basic Latent Class Model

Latent class models are finite mixture models that identify a latent structure of groups within a population. In other words, latent class models group cases with similar answer schemes together. The latent structure underlying the data is expressed as a categorical latent variable, estimated based on multiple empirical indicators. The basic latent class model uses 13 indicators, measuring different incentives for party membership to find a latent variable of types of party members (Figure 6.1).



**Figure 6.1: The basic latent class model** of party membership based on indicator variables measuring different types of incentives.

The model choice, particularly the number of classes in the model, is informed by



goodness-of-fit statistics like the Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC) and a log likelihood ratio test. Once the model is identified, the likelihood of response to the indicators is estimated as probability conditional on class membership. Posterior probabilities of class membership are estimated to identify the party membership type for each respondent.<sup>2</sup> The classes in the model must be homogeneous and distinct in order to qualify as a good model. Based on the latent class model fit, the questions of whether different types of party members can be identified in the data and how many types there are can be answered.

### The Indicator Variables

The following latent class analysis uses a set of 13 indicator variables, or items, measuring different incentives<sup>3</sup> for party membership (Table 6.1). These 13 items are used similarly in different studies on party membership. They cover the three dimensions of incentives (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 22-24): moral-ideological<sup>4</sup> incentives, professional incentives and social incentives (Fig. 6.1). Each item could be answered on a four point scale, stating whether the aspect was (1) *not important at all*, (2) *not important*, (3) *important* or (4) *very important* for joining the party. For the latent class analysis, the four-point scale items were recoded into a binary scale (not important/important) to reflect the bipolar logic of the items and to reduce the complexity in the model (Weerts et al. 2014, 149). These items are the basis for the latent class model.

The descriptive analysis of the incentives for party membership, listed in table 6.1 show that the importance of the different incentives differed a lot for young party members. Most important for them was to change something in society, which almost all members considered to be important. Doing something meaningful, supporting the goals of the party and enjoying political activities were also important to more than

<sup>2</sup>The formal model is elaborated in Appendix B.2.

<sup>3</sup>*Incentives* should be understood in terms of what an individual expects to gain by becoming a party member. A member expects incentives, such as for example being elected to a local, regional or the national parliament, after joining the party or even after a couple of years of being a member. Incentives cannot not be fixed or guaranteed. Whether they materialise depends often solely on the perceptions of the members themselves (The case of the moral-ideological incentive "do something meaningful" is an illustrative example). Incentives are not to be understood as direct and assured benefits related to the membership such as incentives in business life.

<sup>4</sup>Bruter and Harrison (2009a, 22) call them only *moral* incentives, but I also consider items that measure ideological convictions rather than purely moral considerations.

| Item                                      | Abbreviation      | Important |
|---|-------------------|-----------|
| <i>Moral-ideological incentives</i>       |                   |           |
| to change something in society            | Change            | 93%       |
| to do something meaningful                | Meaningful        | 84%       |
| to support the goals of the party         | Supportgoals      | 84%       |
| to influence the politics of the party    | Seekinfluence     | 75%       |
| to act as a responsible citizen           | Responsibility    | 73%       |
| a support a specific person in elections  | Supportperson     | 36%       |
| <i>Professional incentives</i>            |                   |           |
| to get better information about politics  | Information       | 67%       |
| to have networks and contacts             | Networks          | 56%       |
| interest in party office or a mandate     | Office            | 35%       |
| to gain personal or professional benefits | Benefit           | 23%       |
| <i>Social incentives</i>                  |                   |           |
| because I enjoy political activities      | Activities        | 83%       |
| to meet like-minded others                | Likeminded        | 74%       |
| to meet interesting people                | Interestingpeople | 39%       |

**Table 6.1: Indicator variables for the latent class analysis** and their descriptors. Share of answers *very important* and *important* to the question: "Please indicate how important the following reasons were when you joined the SPD." Source: own survey, N=4006.

three quarters of the members. The first three items are moral-ideological incentives, while the last one is a social incentive. The least important item was to gain personal or professional benefits. From the first descriptive view, moral-ideological and social incentives seem to matter more for young members than professional incentives when joining a party.

The correlation table (Table B.1, Appendix) shows only weak correlations between different incentives, but there are some patterns of relationships. These patterns are in line with what is known from previous research that applied factor analysis to incentives (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). There was a medium ( $\geq 0.25$ ) correlation between influencing the politics of the party (*Seekinginfluence*) and wanting to change society (*Change*), as well as between wanting to change society and doing something meaningful (*Meaningful*). These items form a group of moral-ideological incentives. Another medium correlation was visible between the social incentives to enjoy activities (*Activ-*

*ities*) and to meet like-minded others (*Likeminded*). A third aspect concerns personal incentives: Gaining *Benefits* and seeking *Networks* correlated as well. The latter are professional incentives. The basic latent class model helps to understand if and how these potential patterns of incentives are distributed among the party members and how different groups of party members relate to these incentives for party membership.

### Adding Resources: The Latent Class Regression Model

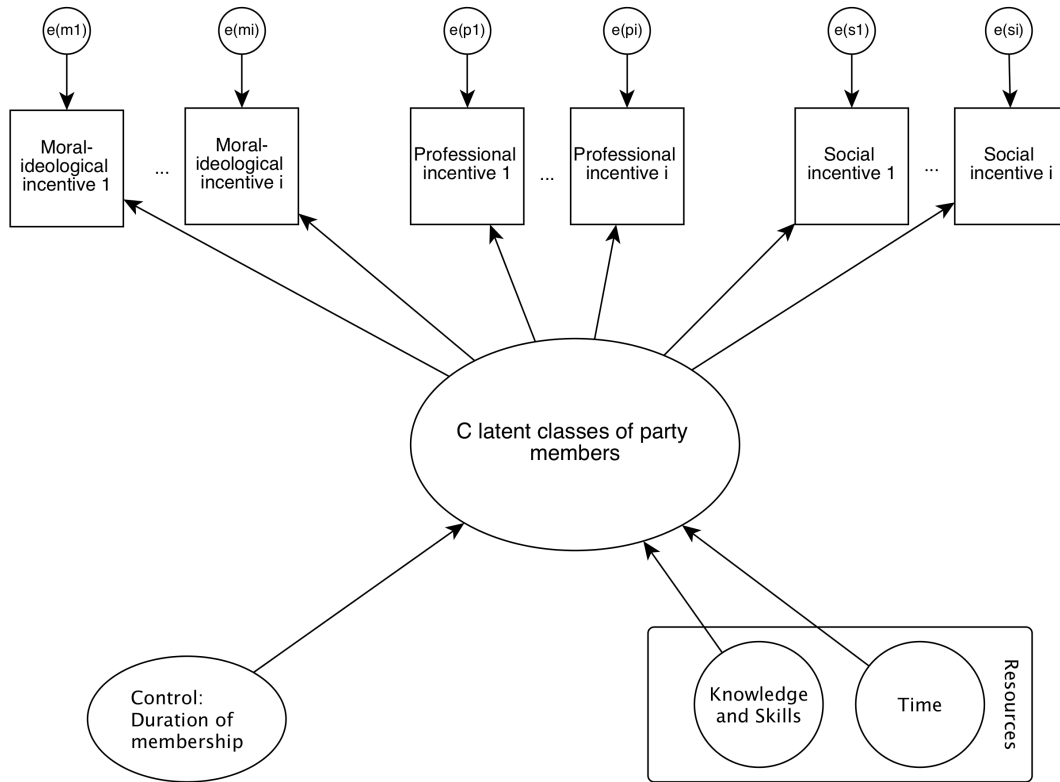
The basic latent class model is generalised by including covariates into the model. These covariates are used to predict individuals' class membership in the latent classes. The method uses a multinomial logistic regression technique but with a latent outcome variable instead of an observed one (Collins and Lanza 2013, 149). The latent class regression model is based on the basic model to build on a tested latent structure. The covariates are introduced in the second step to predict individuals' class membership based on their characteristics. The regression coefficients in the latent class model with covariates are estimated simultaneously as part of the model to avoid bias (Bolck et al. 2004; Linzer and Lewis 2010).<sup>5</sup>

The assumption of this model is that individual resources influence the motivational type of party member. For example, if someone already has knowledge and skills in political processes due to previous activity, their motivation to choose a party might be driven by the specific influence opportunities that a party offers. They may be more strongly motivated to gain public office. For the model in this chapter, this means that the latent class model with identified motivational groups of party members will be expanded using covariates that measure resources. These resources follow the resources logic of *time, money and skills* (Brady et al. 1995), which is also used in Chapter 4. As in Chapter 4, it is difficult to capture the resource of *money*, as the target population is made up of members who were mostly still in the educational life stage and often had not yet established their own finances. The party accommodates this situation by offering a special low membership fee for students that a large part of the young members paid. In Chapter 4, financial means did not play a role for the young activists, so the analysis therefore focuses on time- and skill-related resources and add control variables. Figure

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<sup>5</sup>The formal latent class regression model is elaborated in the Appendix B.2.

6.2 shows the latent class regression model that is used in this analysis.



**Figure 6.2:** The latent class regression model of party membership based on indicator variables measuring different types of incentives.

### Covariates

The covariates include structural resources and individually acquired or inherited capacities. They cover different aspects of time, especially flexibility and availability, and of skills and knowledge related to the party. Some are partly related. For example, both the duration of membership and education in years correlate with the individual age of the member. Additionally, the provisional situation of young people in terms of their educational processes must be taken into consideration. This influences the choice of variables that can measure or stand as a proxy for the resources. The variables are elaborated along the divide of time and skills.

**Time:** The time-related variables measure proxies for how flexible someone is to invest time in the party.

*working:* This is a dummy variable for working full-time or part-time as the main

| Variable                    | Name         | Min. | Max. | Mean  | Median |
|-----------------------------|--------------|------|------|-------|--------|
| <i>Time resources</i>       |              |      |      |       |        |
| Part of the workforce       | working      | 0    | 1    | 0.38  |        |
| Living with a child         | child        | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.11  |        |
| <i>Skills and knowledge</i> |              |      |      |       |        |
| Education in years          | education    | 9    | 30   | 16.27 | 16     |
| Age at joining              | joinage      | 14   | 33   | 20.88 | 20     |
| Union member                | union        | 0    | 1    | 0.29  |        |
| Politically active before   | beforeactive | 0    | 1    | 0.4   |        |
| Actively approached SPD     | activeseek   | 0    | 1    | 0.63  |        |
| <i>Control</i>              |              |      |      |       |        |
| Duration of membership      | duration     | 1    | 21   | 5.58  | 5      |
| Gender is women             | women        | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.26  |        |

**Table 6.2: Descriptive analysis of the covariates** for the latent class regression model. Includes range of the variables, mean and median (only for metric variables). N=4006.

occupation. Young party members were in the life stage where they were transitioning from education to the labour market. Young people still in the educational stage are typically more flexible with their time than those that are already working. It can be expected that those working had less time available for party activities and therefore a higher threshold for becoming a party member.

*child*: This is a dummy variable for those who were living in a household with a least one child. Living with children usually implies care work, especially in the evenings. Party activities, such as internal meetings, typically occur in the evenings. It is therefore expected that living with children results in less time for party activity and influences the reasons why someone becomes a member.

**Skills and knowledge**: The following set of variables measures different aspects of resources that provide young people with skills and knowledge that are relevant for joining a party. Education measures the length of participation in formal education. The joining age stands for the informal knowledge about politics that should increase during the age range of 14-35 years, which is the spectrum of potential answers in the survey. The dummy variable for union membership measures members who joined another political mass member organisation belonging to the broader worker's movement, and

the dummy variable for those with previous political activity measures who made a distinct choice for the party as a place to continue their political activities. The dummy variable for those actively approaching the party distinguishes between members who sought to become a party member and those who were motivated by others.

*education:* This variable measures the time of education in years. The duration of education usually is associated with an increase in knowledge about politics. Therefore, it can be expected that an increase in educational time influenced the young party members' motivations for joining. Because of the ongoing educational processes of many of the young party members at the time of the survey, this variable captures only a snapshot, but it hints at differences among the young members.

*joinage:* This measures the age when the member joined the party. The age of joining hints at the potential acquired knowledge about the implications of becoming a party member, such as how useful party membership can be for reaching a certain goal.

*union:* This dummy variable identifies union members. Membership in a labour union is likely to provide knowledge about the world of politics and collective organisations. In the SPD, being a member of a labour union is also a signal of attachment to the workers' movement. Thus, it is expected that members belonging to labour unions had a more ideological relationship to the party.

*parentsmember:* This is a dummy variable for those who had at least one parent who was a party member. In previous studies, this was an important influence for young party members. The interviews also confirmed that some activists were influenced by their parents (see Chapter 4). A dummy variable that signals whether someone had a parent who was member of the same party is included in the analysis, as having a party member parent is a resource that may lower the threshold for becoming a party member and therefore decrease the need of individual incentives.

*beforeactive:* This is a dummy variable identifying those who had been politically active in a group or non-party organisation before they joined the party. Political activism before joining the party suggests a general interest in political activism. This activism could have provided knowledge about politics and the opportunities a party has to offer, such as providing access to public office.

*activeseek:* This dummy variable measures whether the member had actively ap-

proached the party before they joined or whether they had been recruited to the party. This distinguishes between the members who became a party member out of their own efforts and those who were recruited. Actively seeking membership requires at least some basic knowledge about the party. It can be expected that those who actively sought the party out should have been more distinct about their motivations.

These time- and skill-related variables are the covariates for the model. Besides these variables, the latent class regression model controls for the duration of party membership in years *duration* to incorporate the fact that members' perspectives on their reasons for membership may have been influenced by the time that lies between joining and the moment when they answered to the questionnaire. It also controls for gender, using a dummy variable for *women* as a "usual suspect" for differences in political participation.

## 6.2 Three Motivational Groups of Young Party Members

The implementation of the latent class analysis consists of three parts. First, a basic latent class model is developed and the selection is discussed. Second, a three-class basic latent class model is elaborated as the best basic model. Finally, covariates are introduced into the model to analyse the influence of resources.

### Identifying Groups in the Population

The first step of the latent class analysis is to define a model with a number of classes that best represents the data. Models with different numbers of classes were applied to the data, beginning with the null model with only one latent class up to a high number of classes that is beyond a maximum of theoretically useful classes. There was more than one best solution to decide on the number of classes, but several criteria need to be discussed for model choice. The most widely used statistics for model identification are the AIC and BIC. Additionally, the reduction of the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic should be compared to a model with one less class and the null model (Bacher and Vermunt 2010; Magidson and Vermunt 2004).

The comparison of AIC, BIC and a log-likelihood comparison between different models for different numbers of classes highlighted three possible solutions for a latent class

| No. of classes | P  | AIC   | BIC          | RI0<br>(%)  | RI1<br>(%)  | logL      | logLR         |
|----------------|----|-------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1              | 13 | 57107 | 57189        |             |             | -28540.66 |               |
| <b>2</b>       | 27 | 54556 | 54726        | 4.52        | <b>4.52</b> | -27251.14 | 2579.05       |
| <b>3</b>       | 41 | 53845 | 54103        | <b>5.81</b> | 1.36        | -26881.25 | <b>739.77</b> |
| 4              | 55 | 53515 | 53861        | 6.44        | 0.67        | -26702.47 | 357.56        |
| <b>5</b>       | 69 | 53356 | <b>53792</b> | 6.77        | 0.35        | -26609.10 | 186.74        |
| 6              | 83 | 53270 | 53793        | 6.97        | 0.21        | -26552.05 | 114.10        |
| 7              | 97 | 53216 | 53827        | 7.11        | 0.15        | -26511.13 | 81.83         |

**Table 6.3: Latent class model selection statistics.** Overview of results for models with 1 class (Nullmodel) to 7 classes. Best BIC and best relative improvement are in bold to highlight the potential number of classes in the population. A grey line highlights the selected model. P = number of estimated parameters, logL = maximum log-likelihood, RI0 = relative improvement of the model compared to the null model, RI1 = relative improvement of the model compared to the model with one less class, logLR = log-likelihood reduction, all according to Bacher and Vermunt (2010). All results were calculated using the R-package `poLCA` (cf. Linzer and Lewis 2010).

model: A model with five classes, three classes or two classes (Table 6.3). Even though the BIC of the five-class model was the lowest, the log-likelihood ratio comparison shows that the relative improvement was highest from the null model with one class to the model with two classes (4.52%) and was again relatively good (1.36%) from the model with two classes to the model with three classes. The three-class basic model provided a relative improvement to the null model of 5.81%. This is more than the recommended minimum improvement of 5% for accepting a solution to be preferable to the null model (Bacher and Vermunt 2010).

This three-class model seems to be the most appropriate one for this analysis; it has more explanatory power than a two-class model and is less complex than the five-class model. To check the robustness of the model, the five-class model was applied to the data and analysed, but the five classes were not very distinct. In latent class analysis, it is common that a better BIC is reported while the log-likelihood of the model improves only little. In such a case, the model with fewer classes is the better option (See e.g. Oser et al. (2013)). As a result of these tests, the model that identifies three groups of young party members is used in the further analysis.



## A Typology of Young Party Members

The selected model provides three motivational groups of young party members based on 13 manifest binary variables. The three classes have an estimated population share of 48% (Class 1), 39.1% (Class 2) and 12.8% (Class 3), providing two large classes and one small class of young party members. The second step is to check whether these three groups are well-defined and how they can be characterised.

The quality of a latent class model is assessed by two criteria: *homogeneity* and *distinctness* of the classes. First, the classes should be homogeneous with respect to the answers to the items. A class is well-characterised if the conditional probability of a particular answer to an item is either very high ( $> 0.7$ ) or very low ( $< 0.3$ ) (Masyn 2013). Table 6.4 provides an overview of the three classes, including the amount of homogeneity in the model. Bold probabilities indicate high levels of homogeneity. Second, the classes need to be distinct and clearly separated from one another. The posterior probability of class membership of each case in the sample should be high for one class and low for all other classes. In the model, the mean probability for class membership was higher than 0.8 for all three classes, so the model can be considered to have distinct classes. Both criteria, homogeneity and distinctness, show that the three-class model is sufficient to describe distinct groups of young party members based on the selected 13 incentives as indicators.

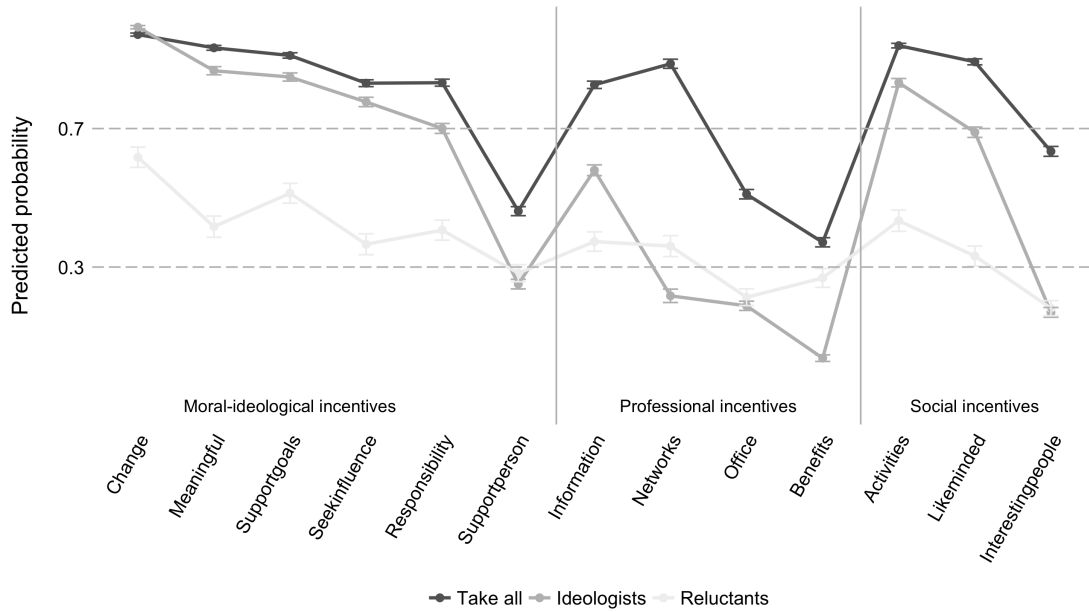
After verifying that the chosen model provides three homogeneous and distinct classes, the next step is to analyse how these three groups of party members are characterised. Figure 6.3 visualises how likely it is that a member in a particular class considered an incentive to be important. The first class is the biggest class, consisting of almost half of the sample. Members in this class had high probabilities of considering most of the given incentives as important, except for individual benefits and supporting a person. They thus responded to all three types of incentives, which are moral-ideological, professional and social incentives. They are called the *Take All* group. The second class is called the *Ideologists*. Members in this class considered most social and moral-ideological incentives for membership as important, but they did not attribute importance to professional incentives. They constitute nearly 40% of the members.

|                                     | Class 1     |        | Class 2     |        | Class 3     |        |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                                     | Take All    |        | Ideologists |        | Reluctants  |        |
| Estimated class population share    | 48%         |        | 39.1%       |        | 12.8%       |        |
| Mean probability of membership*     | 0.88        | (0.15) | 0.82        | (0.15) | 0.84        | (0.17) |
| <i>Moral-ideological incentives</i> |             |        |             |        |             |        |
| Change                              | <b>0.97</b> | (0.00) | <b>0.99</b> | (0.00) | 0.62        | (0.03) |
| Meaningful                          | <b>0.93</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.87</b> | (0.01) | 0.42        | (0.03) |
| Supportgoals                        | <b>0.91</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.85</b> | (0.01) | 0.51        | (0.03) |
| Seekinfluence                       | <b>0.83</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.78</b> | (0.01) | 0.37        | (0.03) |
| Responsibility                      | <b>0.83</b> | (0.01) | 0.70        | (0.01) | 0.41        | (0.03) |
| Supportperson                       | 0.46        | (0.01) | <b>0.25</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.28</b> | (0.02) |
| <i>Professional incentives</i>      |             |        |             |        |             |        |
| Information                         | <b>0.83</b> | (0.01) | 0.58        | (0.02) | 0.37        | (0.03) |
| Networks                            | <b>0.89</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.22</b> | (0.02) | 0.36        | (0.03) |
| Office                              | 0.51        | (0.01) | <b>0.19</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.21</b> | (0.02) |
| Benefits                            | 0.37        | (0.01) | <b>0.04</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.27</b> | (0.03) |
| <i>Social incentives</i>            |             |        |             |        |             |        |
| Activities                          | <b>0.94</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.83</b> | (0.01) | 0.43        | (0.03) |
| Likeminded                          | <b>0.89</b> | (0.01) | 0.69        | (0.01) | 0.33        | (0.03) |
| Interestingpeople                   | 0.63        | (0.01) | <b>0.17</b> | (0.01) | <b>0.18</b> | (0.02) |

**Table 6.4: Results of the basic latent class analysis.** The numbers show the predicted probabilities of considering the respective incentive as *important* conditional on class membership (standard error in parentheses). Items with probabilities  $< 0.3$  and  $> 0.7$  are bolded to highlight the high degree of class homogeneity. BIC of the model: 54102.62. (Entropy based) Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.67$ . \*Standard deviation in parentheses.

Members in the third class generally had a low probability of considering any of the given incentives as important. They seem to be a distinct class of party members that did not consider the given incentives as important for their membership. They are called the *Reluctant* members, meaning that they were reluctant to consider the usual incentives of party membership. This group is very small compared to the other groups (13%).

The overview of the groups shows that the 13 incentives capture well what young party members consider to be important when joining the party, but there is a small group in the survey that was not motivated by these incentives. The majority of young



**Figure 6.3: Predicted probabilities for the basic latent class analysis.** The graphs show the predicted probabilities of attributing importance to the different incentives for each latent class (the error bars showing the standard error of the estimation). The y-axis shows the conditional probability that members of a latent class consider the items on the x-axis to be important for joining the party. The horizontal lines show the threshold of 0.3 and 0.7 for class homogeneity.

members in the survey is motivated by moral-ideological and social incentives, confirming results from previous research (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). The *Ideologists* and the *Take All* group are similar to some extent. Members in both groups considered moral-ideological incentives to be important. But these two groups are distinct in how they responded to individual, professional incentives that may be important for potential future careers. While the *Ideologist* members considered building networks and seeking party or public office to be of little importance, these incentives were important for the *Take All* group. This highlights that the main divide between the young party members is about professional incentives. The *Reluctant* members are different than the other groups, and their existence goes beyond what is known so far about motivational settings and requires further analysis. This trichotomous structure briefly characterises the three groups in the model.

The *Ideologists* attributed importance to those incentives that can be considered to be the "collective benefits" (Seyd and Whiteley 1992) of party membership. They were motivated both by incentives that belong in the moral-ideological and social categories (Bruter and Harrison 2009b, 22f.). They had a strong tendency to enjoy political

activities, and they wanted to meet like-minded others, incentives that are social benefits for the party members. In terms of moral-ideological incentives, they considered doing something meaningful, changing society, seeking influence, and supporting the goals of the party to be important. These incentives are related to the moral-ideological aspect of party membership and provide them with moral and ideological benefits. They did not value the opportunity to support a person and mostly disagreed with the professional incentives. I suggest that these members constitute a distinct group that is driven by ideology and moral duty while at the same time valuing the social benefits that the party can provide.

The *Take All* group also attributed importance to social and moral-ideological benefits of their party membership, but they were distinct in that they also valued professional benefits that may provide them with personal gains in the future. They wanted to improve their networks as well as get information about politics. If the constraint of having a conditional probability of  $> 0.7$  is lowered, members in this group were also interested in party or public office and in meeting politicians. These benefits of party membership are clearly professional incentives (Bruter and Harrison 2009a, 23f.). For the members in this group, all three dimensions of incentives were important. Members who were basically interested in all types of incentives constitute this class and are distinct to other members in that they valued professional benefits. The group size illustrates that half of the young party members in the survey had a very heterogeneous set of motivations.

The class of *Reluctants* includes the young party members who had a low probability of attributing importance to any incentives of party membership. Exceptions were changing society and supporting the goals of the party, but the members in this group even had lower probabilities of choosing these incentives than the members in the other latent classes; the probabilities for both are below the 0.7 threshold as well. This seems to be a small group of party members who tended not to expect incentives from their membership, at least not the ones that are frequently asked in party membership surveys. They seem to have mainly an ideological connection to the party, as they shared the goals of the party and saw it as a place where they could contribute to societal change. However, further investigation needed on what explains their membership and

especially on what their future perspectives are. This is done in Chapter 7.

The data analysis shows that some ideological incentives were important for all young party members when they joined the party. They all wanted to bring about change and support the goals of the party. This is the baseline of party membership. The main divide is between the members who considered professional benefits as important and the members who were mainly ideologically and socially motivated; these two groups together made 86% of the membership. But there was a small minority that is not at all interested in most of the benefits that a party provides them. As Seyd and Whiteley (1992, 60-64) argue, it is impossible to understand reasons for membership if only considering costs and benefits. Social norms, like the connection to the party milieu, may also play a role. This may be the case for members in the Reluctant group, and it is investigated when we analyse the influence of resources in the following section.

The basic model shows that there are three distinct groups of young party members based on the incentives they consider important. The next step of the analysis is based on the argument that individual resources, which have proven to influence opportunities to participate in politics and become a party member in general, should also influence what kind of incentives an individual has for joining a party. This is included into the latent class analysis by adding covariates to the model.

## Resources across Groups of Party Members

The best model to explain the influence of resources on the three groups of young party members is chosen by a forward testing strategy that uses statistic criteria for model fit. The trichotomous structure of young party members is the dependent variable in the analysis. The influence of resources on party member incentives is not yet understood, and a forward testing strategy helps to understand the patterns of influence. Model fit is based on a BIC comparison and a significance test of the log-likelihood improvement compared to a model with one less class. The basic latent class model without covariates is the null model against which models are tested for significant improvement. Each covariate is introduced in the model to test whether its effect is statistically significant. The significant covariates are combined step-by-step, and the new model is tested again on whether its increased complexity provides a significant improvement.

|                             | Ideologists | Reluctants |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Intercept                   | -2.002***   | -5.134***  |
| <i>Time resources</i>       |             |            |
| working                     | -0.179      | 0.072      |
| <i>Skills and knowledge</i> |             |            |
| Education                   | 0.097***    | 0.085***   |
| Joinage                     | -0.035*     | 0.096***   |
| Union                       | 0.413***    | -0.351*    |
| Beforeactive                | 0.092       | -0.502***  |
| Activeseek                  | 0.332**     | 0.043      |
| <i>Control</i>              |             |            |
| Duration                    | 0.103***    | 0.134***   |
| BIC                         | 53845       |            |
| $R^2$ (McFaddon adj.)       | 0.005       |            |

**Table 6.5: Results of the latent class regression analysis** Regression coefficients based on reference class: *Take All*. Results of the Wald statistics, significance levels: \* < 0.05, \*\* < 0.01, \*\*\* < 0.001.

The best model to explain the resources of the three motivational groups includes the covariate *working*, a dummy variable for those who were already in the workforce as a proxy for flexibility in terms of time, and the covariates *education*, which measures education in years, *joinage*, which measures the age when joining the party, *union*, a dummy variable for union members and *beforeact*, a dummy variable for those that were political activists before they joined the party and *activeseek*, a dummy variable for those members that actively approached the party to become a member. Additionally, the model controls for the *duration* of membership. The variable *living with a child* was not significant. The variable *parentsmember* did not improve the model.<sup>6</sup> The control variable *women*, a dummy variable for women, was neither significant as a single covariate nor did it improve the model when added. The results of the forward testing strategy can be found in the Appendix, table B.2. The following analysis uses this best model.

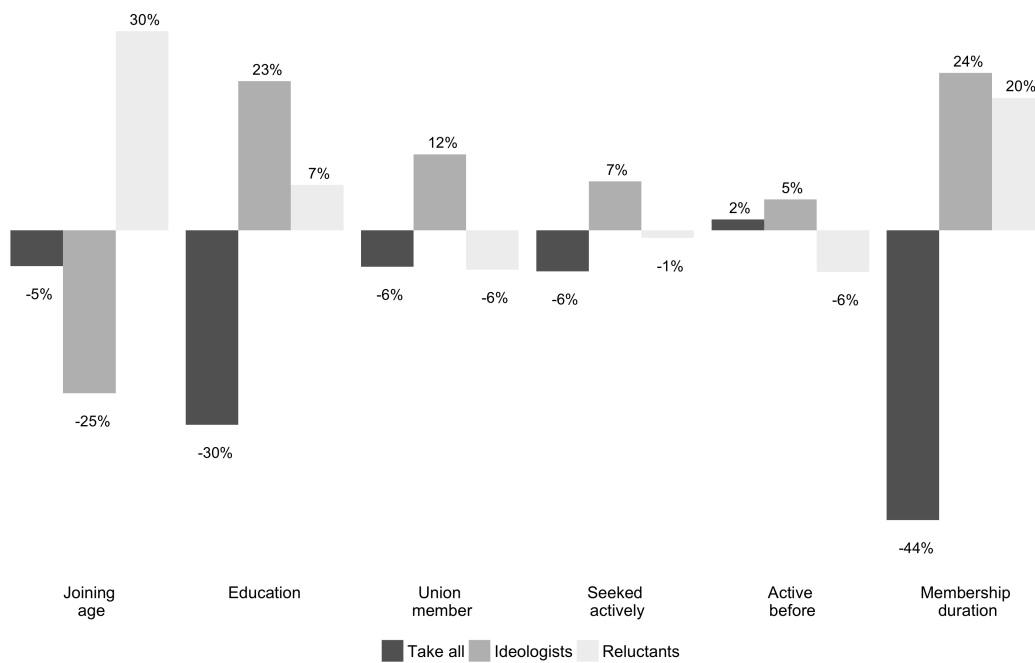
<sup>6</sup>The improvement was tested with a log-likelihood comparison between the respective model and the model without that variable (Collins and Lanza 2013, 154). The formula can be found in the Appendix, table B.2.

The regression results show that all covariates except for the dummy variable *working* differentiate significantly between the different motivational groups. This means that the time flexibility that is connected with being in the workforce instead of an educational setting does not influence the incentives for joining. The skill- and knowledge-related resources all have a significant effect between the groups. The reference class in the analysis is the *Take-All* group because it is the biggest class of the basic model. Table 6.5 summarises the regression results. The coefficients indicate that the three groups are different in their resources. As the results of a multinomial logistic regression are difficult to understand from the pure regression coefficients, they are visualised using a comparison of the predicted class sizes when the values of the independent variables are at a minimum and when they are at a maximum. Figures 6.4 and 6.5 visualise this comparison.

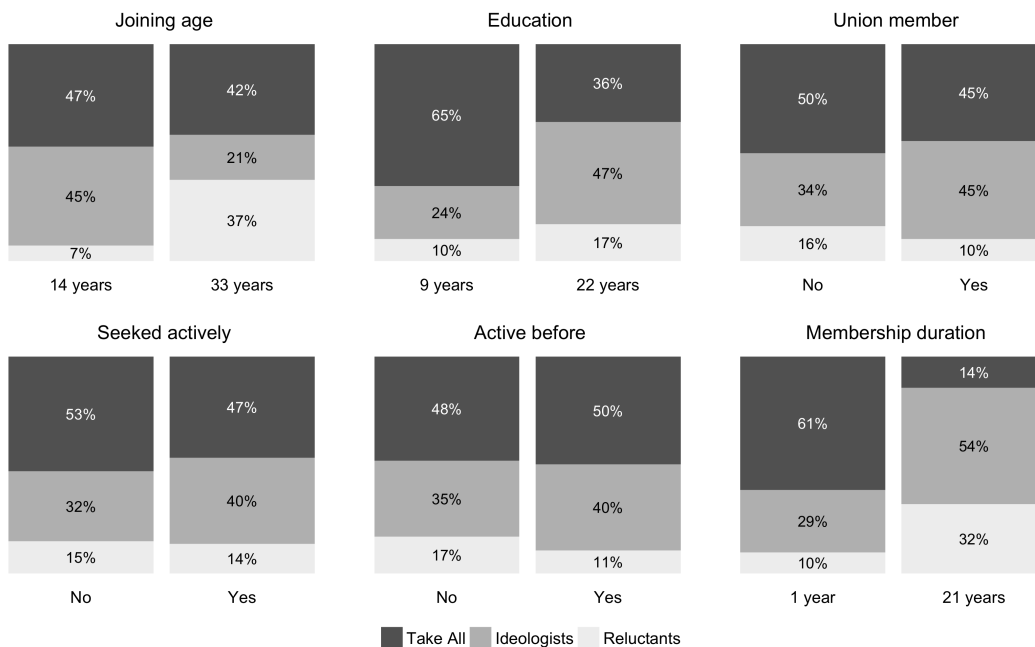
The comparison shows that the joining age, education, union membership and whether someone sought actively to become a party member differ clearly across the groups. However, the weaker effect of previous political activity also hints at the influences of such a resource on the incentives of the young members.

The results show that resources help to understand the main distinction between the three groups. The main divide between the two big groups, *Take All* members and *Ideologists*, is their attitude towards professional benefits. To summarise, long educational processes, union membership and an active approach towards the party make it more likely that a member disregarded professional benefits and belongs to the *Ideologist* group. The third group of *Reluctants* were not interested in any of the benefits. The joining age is an important characteristic for this group: late joiners were more often reluctant towards membership incentives.

The joining age influences incentives, as those who joined the party relatively late are much less likely to be among the *Ideologists*. They were either motivated by a very heterogeneous set of incentives or did not consider any incentives to be important. Those who joined the party at a young age are almost equally either *Take All* members or *Ideologists*. This means that those members who made an early decision to join the party were more clear in their motivations. They equally did and did not consider professional incentives, meaning usually individual benefits, as important, but only a



**Figure 6.4: Change in predicted class size at the minimum and maximum of the covariates.** The bars show the difference in predicted class size when the value of the independent variable changes from its minimum to its maximum. All other variables are kept at a mean. Reading example: The chance of being in the *Take All* group is 44% lower for those with the longest duration of membership compared to those that joined a year ago.



**Figure 6.5: Composition of motivational groups at the minimum and maximum of the covariates.** The bars show the composition of the groups when the value of the independent variable is at a minimum (the left bar) and at a maximum (the right bar). All other variables are kept at a mean. Reading example: Those that actively approached the SPD to become a member are 53% *Take All* members, 32% *Ideologists* and 15% *Reluctants*



very small minority had no incentives at all. The late members only rarely disregarded professional benefits. This indicates that late decisions for becoming a party member are driven more by personal interests.

Two of the resources explain the differences between *Take All* and *Ideologist* members well. Both union members and those who approached the party actively were more likely to be focused on moral-ideological and some social incentives. They were more ideologically attached to the party and less interested in personal gains. This confirms what was already seen in the mono- and bivariate analyses in Chapter 3. There seems to be some young party members with a strong ideological focus on the classic social democratic milieu.

The former activists are more likely to be *Ideologists* and less likely to be *Reluctants*. This is not surprising, as it is expected that former party activists are more aware about what the party can offer compared to other political activities. But there is no difference in the likelihood to accept also personal benefits, so it is impossible to assume that former activists seek parties often because of their access to political power.

The duration of education has a strong effect on whether the members were dominantly motivated by all incentives or solely by collective incentives of ideology. The latter group had longer educational processes. The results indicate that more time spent in educational processes reduces the attractiveness of personal benefits. A possible explanation is that lower educated party members are more interested in gaining information and seeking out networks to compensate for their lack of education. This possible explanation highlights the compensating effect of a collective political organisation for lacking individual resources (Kabeer et al. 2013). But these results require very careful interpretation. A large share of the members surveyed was still in education and may reach higher education levels in the future.

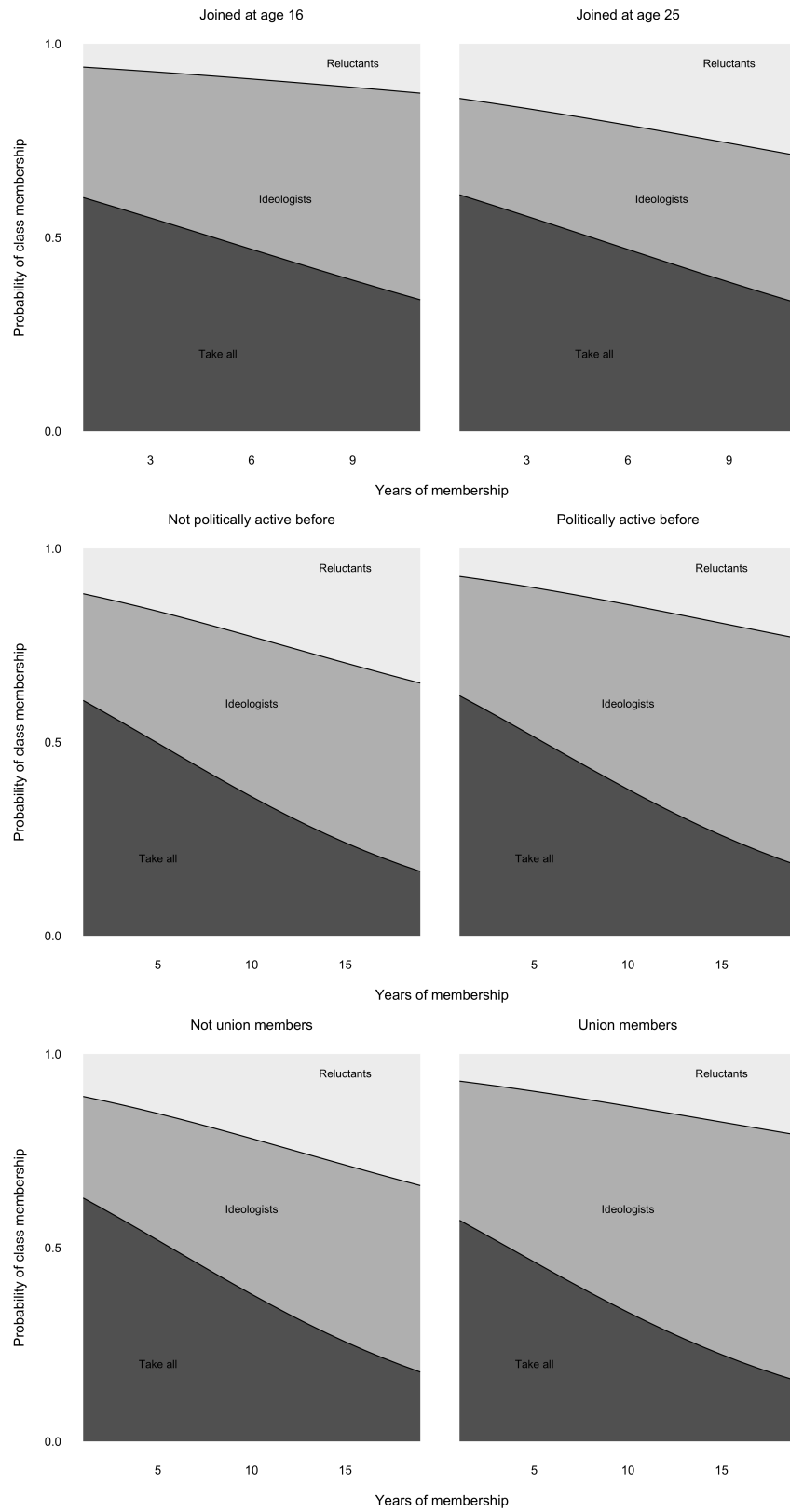
The control variable of membership duration is very important, and it suggests that this might be more than an effect that needs to be controlled. Those that had a minimum *membership duration* of one year are very likely to be a *Take All* member. Furthermore, it seems that a longer duration of membership may change the importance of incentives. The large group of *Ideologists* among the long-term members shows that professional incentives were not very important for those with several years of membership. There

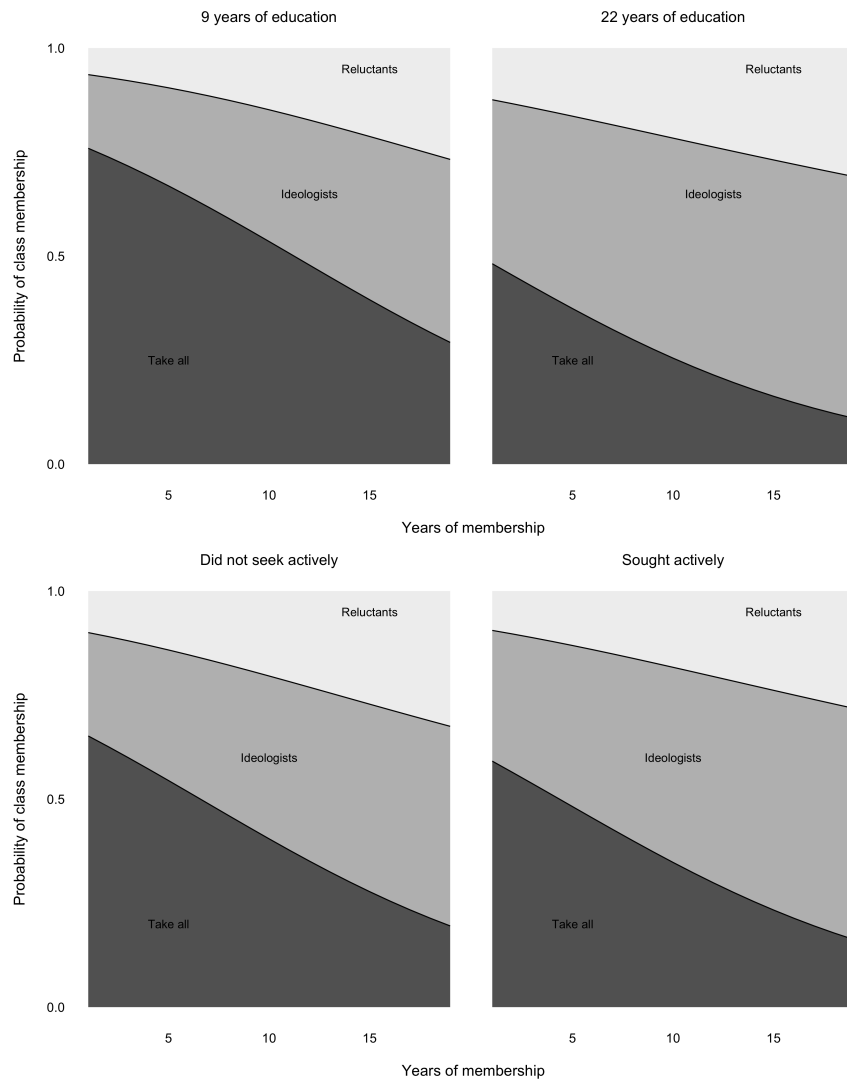
could be an effect of time: Members with longer memberships may have experienced that some of their motives did not materialise when they were members, and, as a result, they became less important. A different explanation may be that those members who were interested in all incentives might leave after they do not see them materialise, and the long-term members are already a selected subgroup. It is not possible to determine what is more likely the explanatory power due to the limited nature of the data. Since this analysis only has cross-sectional data, it is impossible to follow individual changes. The strong influence of the duration of membership, however, does indicate that there is some development of incentives over time.

Since the control variable *membership duration* has such strong effects, it seems feasible to examine how the effects of the other variables change when membership duration changes. Figure 6.6 shows the change in class size of all five predictors at different values of membership duration. The figure shows that joining age, former activism, union membership and education differ across membership duration, although there is no difference if an individual actively sought membership or not. These interactions require further analysis.

The probability of being in a certain class differs strongly between early and late joiners when looking at the interaction of joining age with the membership duration. In Chapter 3, these aspects are only weakly correlated, as recent members can be at very diverse ages. According to the model, the members who joined the party at age 16 were relatively seldom reluctant to select the membership incentives, and they are split almost equally between *Ideologists* and the *Take All* group. For longer durations of membership, the change is mainly between these two groups. But for members who joined as late as at age 25, a longer duration of membership increases the chances of being among the *Reluctants*, while the *Ideologist* group is relatively small. This means that those joining late are motivated by all kinds of incentives, but they tend to "lose" their incentives after some years.

## Chapter 6. Motivational Groups of Young Party Members





**Figure 6.6: Effects of regression variables at different membership durations.** Figures show the predicted probability changes when membership duration changes for (a) joining age, (b) political activism before party membership (c) union membership, (d) education, (e) actively seeking party membership. Values show the fitted values for the respective variable at different values of membership duration. All other predictors were kept at a mean.

The former activists and the union members display very similar patterns of class membership at different durations of membership. Both were much more likely to become reluctant after being a member for a long time, but on a much lower level than those who had not been active before or those without a union membership. Both aspects seem to "stabilise" the moral-ideological and social incentives over time while the interest in professional incentives vanishes equally among members who had no union membership or previous activism.

The length of education has a similar effect. The members with the longest educa-

tional periods were more likely to have no professional incentives and are (*Ideologists*), and this increases with longer membership durations. The least educated were very likely to be open for all different kinds of incentives. Again, it is necessary to take into consideration that the target group of the study was mostly still in their educational processes. This is especially true for those with the least education.

The analysis shows that the influence of membership duration on the motivational settings of party members is important, but skills and knowledge resources play a role regardless of the membership duration. This study cannot track developments during young party members' duration of membership, but it captures the ex-post rationalisation of their reasons for joining. These rationalisations are likely to be influenced by their durations of membership. The strong influence of the covariate shows that the duration and related experience within the party matter when attempting to understand young party membership after the moment of joining.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, a latent class model is developed to answer two separate questions: first, whether groups can be identified among the young party members based on their incentives, and second, how the individual resources of the members relate to the motivational groups to which they belong. The latent class analysis approach shows that there are three distinct groups of young party members based on what kind of incentives they considered important for their membership. The largest group responded to all three types of membership incentives, and they are called the *Take All* members. The second largest group considered only moral-ideological and social incentives to be important and did not accept the professional incentives of a party membership as relevant. This group is the *Ideologists*. A third and much smaller group diverged from incentive-based explanations, as the members of this group did not consider any incentives to be important for their decisions to join the party. They are called the *Reluctants*. These three groups form the basic model of motivational groups of young party members.

The analysis adds to the understanding of incentive-based explanations for party

membership by showing that the different types of incentives are not a question of "either-or". The majority of young party members had more than just one dominant incentive for joining. One group had a trichotomous structure of incentives, another group had two important motivational sets and a third group could not be explained by the classic sets of incentives at all. The crucial difference between the members is whether they considered professional incentives as important or not. The *Take All* group was interested in incentives that could advance a political or professional career, but they were motivated as much by moral-ideological and social incentives. Seeing moral-ideological incentives in joining a party can be considered to be common sense for the young party members. This means that for those considering career-related benefits when joining a party, ideology plays a role as well, and they cannot be expected to be simply political careerists.

The introduction of resources into the latent class analysis highlights how individual resources differ across the three groups. The regression analysis confirms that the different groups of members were distinct in their skills and knowledge. It shows that union membership, actively approaching the party and long educational processes reduce interest in professional benefits. These members are more likely to be solely ideologically motivated. Members with the least number of years of education were mostly interested in all kinds of membership benefits. Due to the nature of the population in the survey, however, many had not yet finished their education. It has been argued from a life cycle perspective that young people in education value the professional incentives that a party has to offer more because they are still on their way of settling into a professional life (Bruter and Harrison 2009b, 21f.). This may explain the education gap among our groups.

Another notable aspect is the influence of former political activity. In Chapter 4, the former activists chose their party more strategically. They expressed a pragmatic need for membership out of their former political experiences because they knew that they liked such activities and because they wanted to have more influence within a party. This would hint at a motivational setting that includes moral-ideological and social benefits at least as well as some professional incentives. The analysis in this chapter confirms the presence of these incentives, especially when examining the role

of former political activity for members with different durations of membership. The former activists were unlikely to belong to the Reluctant group, even after several years of membership. It seems that their decision to join the party was well-founded, and their motivation remained after the joined.

Comparing the two extreme categories, the *Take All* members and the *Reluctants*, allows for a possible explanation about how membership incentives may change. The latter group did not consider any incentives as important while the first group found them most, if not all, to be important. The strong influence of the membership duration on these groups is striking. The *Reluctants* were more likely to be members for a long time. It is impossible to determine whether this effect is rooted in differences between "generations" of young members or the difference is a result of disappointed hopes due to the limitations of the data. Because it is not possible to measure the "true" reasons at the time of joining but only ex-post rationalisations of incentives, the difference likely reflects a change in motivations over time. After some years, possibly because they experienced that not all incentives materialised, the relevance of incentives might depreciate for some members. The likelihood of members who belonged to the SPD for only one year shifts from being in the *Take All* group to both the *Ideologists* and the *Reluctants* in almost equal terms. This means that for some members only the personal benefits became less important after some years while for others all incentives lost their appeal.

The motivational groups provide a basis upon which the next chapter can build to define the differences between the young party members more clearly. The *Reluctants* seem to have different reasons for their membership that are not yet fully captured. One explanation could be that this group is made up of those members who have been so often disappointed that they are almost on their way out of the party. Whether this explanation is true is investigated further in the next chapter, which focuses on the future perspectives of the young members. The next part examines the question of who is envisioning what kind of future in the party, who might focus on a career and who is about to leave the party. The motivational groups serve as an explanatory factor for the future perspectives.

## Chapter 7

# Envisioning the Future in the Party

“Those who want to be promoted need perseverance, and they need to barbecue sausages at local party events for years. A mandate in the state or national parliament is given to those who have been present for years, who ‘earned’ it. Ambitious young people are suspicious. They [...] arouse envy, not admiration, when in a prominent public position.”<sup>1</sup>

The quote points to a common assumption about young people’s situation in old and established mass member parties: Their opportunities to reach a decision-making position in the party are limited due to the large number of older members who stand first in line. This common assumption has not changed as these parties professionalised their structures. Many of those who finally make it to the exalted positions of party politics have a long history of party activism. They started when they were young and built networks in youth party politics (see section ?? in Chapter 2). It has been analysed that involvement that starts at young age helps to build a party career. But who among all the young party members finally ends up in more influential positions and who loses interest in this form of political participation? These questions form the backbone of this chapter.

The question about the future membership of the professionalised party goes beyond the motivations of young people who join such a party. It is also influenced by who will

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<sup>1</sup>Orig.: "Wer aufsteigen will, muss Ausdauer haben und jahrelang Bratwürste auf Ortsvereinsfesten grillen. Das Mandat für den Land- oder Bundestag bekommt nämlich der oder die, die schon lange dabei ist, es also ‘verdient’ hat. Ehrgeizige junge Leute werden dagegen misstrauisch beäugt, wer [...] prominent in der Öffentlichkeit auftritt, erntet Neid, keine Bewunderung." die tageszeitung (2016).



become a future leader in the party and what influences this trajectory, as well as by how stable the membership of young people is and who might leave the party in the near future. The investigation of the motivational basis of young party membership in Chapter 6 shows that young party members are very heterogeneous. They are motivated by different sets of incentives, and it is expected that they also have different plans about their party-related futures. This chapter examines what influences young party members' thinking about their personal future in the party.

It is reasonable to believe that the course for a future party career is set during youth membership. The interviews with young activists show that there is a clear distinction between party members who are highly engaged in the party and have a sense of being capable to influence the party and party members who express strong feelings of frustration and a lack of motivation (see Chapter 5). In the interviews, there were a few hints that members in the latter group will not form the future party elite and may potentially leave. The members interviewed were often more attached to the youth organisation and their social group than to the SPD and thought about leaving the party once this environment dissolved. This allows for the expectation that there are also very different perspectives on future influence and potential leaving within the wider group of all young party members that require further investigation to understand the dynamics of young membership in an ageing catch-all party.

Evidence from previous studies suggests that young party members' perspectives on their future in the party are influenced by party activity experiences and perceptions of personal influence. Party engagement is an important precondition for a party career; in fact, it is more important than the oft-mentioned family socialisation (Van Liefferinge et al. 2012). Extensive involvement in party activity is important for being nominated by the party for parliamentary elections (Böhm 2015, 138f.), and, in the U.S. where the party organisations are weaker, belief in personal efficacy was found to be decisive when party members developed nascent ambitions to run as a candidate in elections (Fox and Lawless 2005). It is likely that there are some "power seekers" (Lasswell 1948, 20) among the young party members who are more likely to be part of the future party leadership than other members. It is important to understand who these members are and why.

This chapter develops a model to analyse how young party members envision their personal future in the party. In the first step, how achievable young party members consider an elected position within the party or in public office is examined, and, in the second step, what influences the likelihood of young members to leave the organisation is analysed. This analysis focuses the impact of young members' party activities on their future perspectives and the perception of their personal influence as well as general aspects such as political attitudes and milieu ties. The end of this chapter builds on the motivational groups that are identified in Chapter 6 and connects them with different career seeking perspectives.

The analysis is based on what young members expressed in the survey to plan in the party within the next ten years. The data places some limitations for the analysis. The cross-sectional data does not offer any information about career developments of the young members, but the future behaviour of the young members can be estimated based on their responses. The analysis seeks to explain what influences young party members' expectations of obtaining a future position within the party, in public office or in government. Fox and Lawless (2005, 644) refer to expectations of attaining a position as the "nascent" political ambition meaning that having an idea that being a candidate is an option is one important precondition for actually running in a later election. The same holds true for thinking about leaving the party. The expression of such thoughts precedes behaviour, and it is a good indicator for the likelihood of future steps towards action (Ajzen 1991; Kelly and Breinlinger 1995).

The analysis shows that both the question of whether an individual believes in the possibility of obtaining a position in the future or thinks about leaving the party is strongly influenced by the feeling of having an influence on party decision-making. Members who are highly active and feel that they can influence the party envision a future in party while members who lack such a feeling may leave. The results of this chapter confirm the divide between potential future leaders and potential leavers that already appeared in the interviews with young activists in Chapter 5. Also the main divide between the two larger motivational groups in Chapter 6 is confirmed. The analysis links these motivational groups with two different types of career seekers. This chapter elaborates this divide further and contributes to a deeper understanding of the

motivational groups of members and their perspectives on the future. It closes with an elaboration of three types of young party members based on their motivation and their future perspective.

This chapter is structured as follows: This chapter first discusses the four explanatory logics of potential influence on the future of young party members. How these logics can be measured is also introduced. Second, logistic regression models are applied to identify the explanatory power of these explanatory logics and their possible combinations. This analysis is divided into a model of potential careers, which are understood as the likelihood to obtain an elected position in the party or a position in public office or government, followed by a model to explain the likelihood of leaving. At the end of the chapter, the regression results are reported and discussed in terms of their implications for professionalised parties.

## 7.1 Explaining the Future Perspectives of Young Party Members

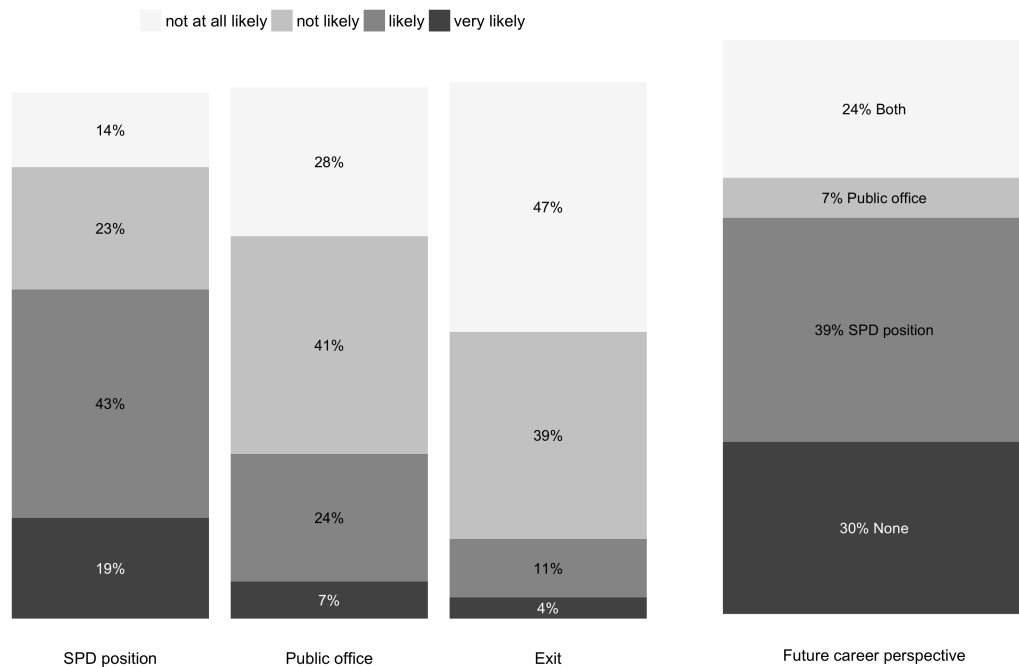
The decision of whether it is likely for a member to obtain an elected position or to leave the organisation is not an either-or decision. There are potential scenarios in which an individual may remain a member in the party but not strive for any further position but is occasionally involved in a campaign or other party activities. Other young members may not be active at all and just belong to the membership lists of the party. Many previous studies on party membership revealed that there is a significant group of members who belong to this type of "silent" or "nominal" members (Klein 2006; Nonnenmacher and Spier 2014; Scarrow 2002; Tan 1998; Weldon 2006). To accommodate for the independence of the two decisions that involve the future, two independent analyses are employed that model (1) the influences on expecting personal career opportunities and (2) the influences on the likelihood of leaving the party.

The young party members were asked in the survey how likely they think it is that three different things will happen within the next ten years from the time of the survey: Obtaining an elected position in the party, obtaining a public office or government position through the party or leaving the party. The analysis in this chapter uses the results from these three questions to form two dependent variables. First, the four-scale

answer scheme is summarised into a two-scale answer scheme (*likely* and *not likely*) that reflects the bipolarity of the answers. The first two items are generalised into a factor measuring the future career perspective on four levels: whether an individual envisions holding no position at all, an elected position in the SPD, a public office or government position or both. The third item measures the likelihood to leave the organisation. Figure 7.1 shows the answers to the three questions and the generalised factor. A model that seeks to explain the influences on imagining a further political career or leaving the party must go beyond the initial motivations of becoming a party member and address further explanations. The reasons for joining a party are a speculation about the future. Young party members expect that incentives, be they moral-ideological, professional or social, are realised after they join the party. The following section discusses four explanatory logics that are used to analyse the influences on the future perspectives of the young party members, both in terms of their career plans and potential leaving. These logics are applied to two logistic regression analyses. In the following section, the dependent variables for both analyses are discussed, followed by the elaboration of the four logics and their implementation into the logistic models.

### Influences on Young Party Members Perspectives of a Future in the Party

There are two possible methods to understand the influences on future political careers. The first method is to analyse current leaders' predispositions and their career paths to understand what made them become a leader. The second path is to try and investigate who may become a leader in the future and what distinguishes them from other members who think they are unlikely to become part of a future leadership. This analysis follows the second path. This approach makes the assumption that the expression of interest precedes behaviour that is directed towards the goal (Ajzen 1991; Fielding et al. 2008). It is impossible to foresee the future, and any estimation of potential future career paths always includes a degree of uncertainty. Following Fox and Lawless (2005), however, I argue that by analysing what influences considerations of running for a political office in the future, it is possible to capture the "critical beginning stages of the candidate emergence process" that they call "nascent political ambition" (644). This nascent ambition is the base for any kind of manifest political ambitions. The



**Figure 7.1: Descriptive analysis of the dependent variables.** Answers to the question: "How likely do you consider it within the next ten years to (1) hold an elected position within the party, (2) hold a position in public office or government or (3) leave the party?" The latter is summarised into a factor combining the *most likely* and *likely* as well as *not likely* and *not at all likely* and serves as the dependent variable for the analysis on leaving the party. On the right: Summarised descriptors of future variable. Members who considered it to be likely or very likely to have obtained (1) no position (2) an elected position in the SPD, (3) a position in public office or government or (4) both.

first model in this chapter investigates the influences on the consideration of seeking an elected office in the party or a position in public office or government through the party in the future.

The dependent variable is a factor that measures if, within the next ten years, a member thought it is likely that they would (1) hold an elected position in the party, (2) hold a position in public office or government, (3) hold both or (4) hold none. The reference group is the fourth group that did not envision holding any position in the near future. Members in this group constitute 30% of all young members surveyed. The biggest group (39%) could consider holding any elected position in the party, and 24% considered it possible to hold both a party position and a public office or government office. A small group of 7% thought only about public office or government positions without obtaining an elected position within the party, which reflects the fact that this is usually very unlikely (Evans 2012; Verge and Claveria 2016).

The dependent variable does not distinguish between the different levels that are

possible in both public and party offices in a federal political structure. There can be positions on the local or regional level, on the state level or even on the federal level. Such a broad approach takes into account that there may be very different paths to start a career within a party and that becoming an elected official on the regional level can also be the start for future careers on higher levels. Since this analysis focuses on young members who had different levels of experience and durations of membership, it seems rational not to differentiate what kind of position a member envisioned. Members who considered any type of position have in common that they thought of themselves being able to run in an election and decide and influence the future of the party.

### Influences on Young Party Members Perspectives on Leaving the Party

Analysing the potential of leaving the party has some inherent methodological problems. Only rarely is it possible to draw a sample of former party members from the population. Another option is to ask current party members if they are thinking about leaving the party.<sup>2</sup> Measuring thoughts of potentially leaving is always a speculation about the future, which is similar to the analysis of nascent political ambition and future careers. A member expressing that they may leave the party soon might be a picture of frustration with the organisation in general or just a particular situation. However, it is also likely that the expression of plans precedes the likelihood of actually doing so within the foreseeable future to a great extent. The dependent variable for analysing potential leavers is a dummy variable from the question "In ten years from now, how likely is it that you will have left the SPD?" The four-scale answer scheme (very unlikely, unlikely, likely, very likely) was recoded into a dummy variable to reflect the bipolar structure of the answer. In total, 15% of the young members found it likely that they may leave the party within the next ten years.

### Four Explanatory Logics That Investigate Future Perspectives

This analysis aims to understand who is in the pool of potential candidates for future political office and who is likely to exit the party and why. Both the *nascent political ambitions* as well as the *nascent alienation*, expressed as the likelihood to leave the

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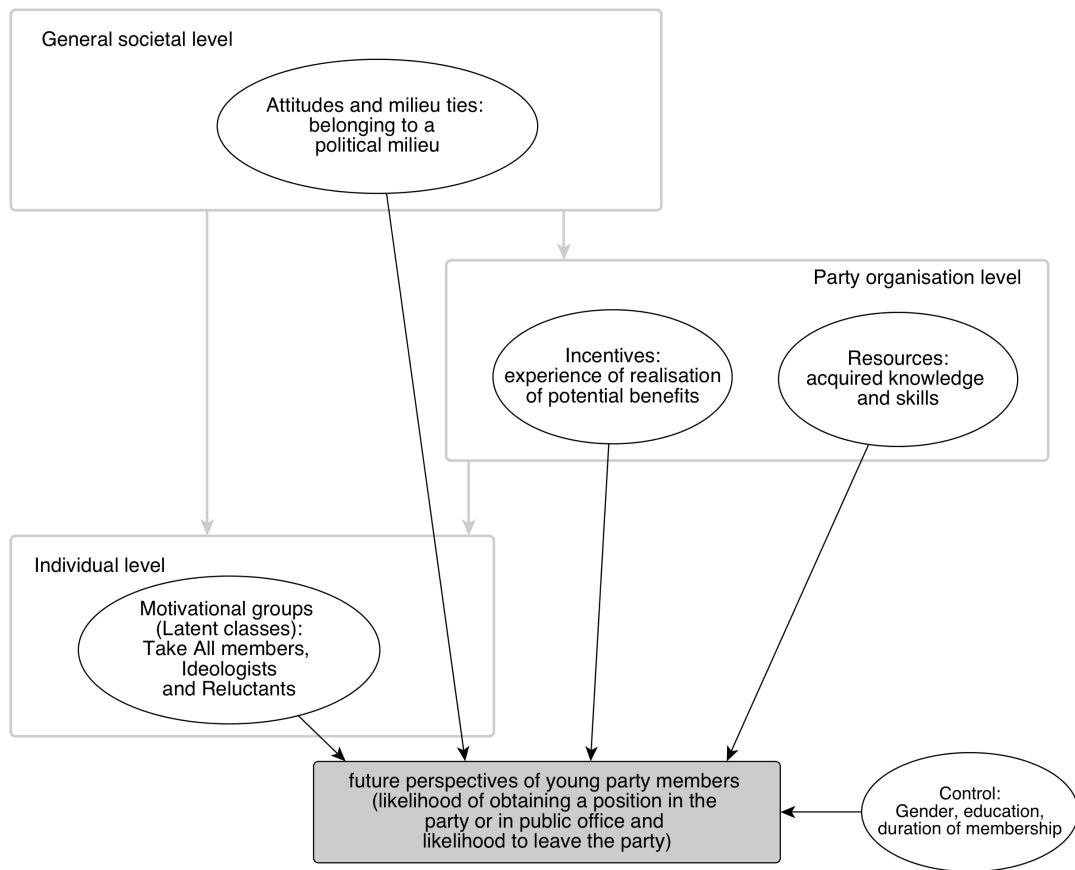
<sup>2</sup>For a comparison of these different approaches see e.g. (Rohrbach 2011).

party in the near future, can be understood as envisioning a personal future in relation to the party.

Four different logics possibly influence young party members' perspectives on the future, which are based on the theoretical considerations that resulted in this study of party membership. On the level of society, general political **attitudes and milieu ties** shape the attachment to the party. On the level of the party organisation, members' experiences influence whether they think they can achieve what they expected to from joining the party. The analysis includes a broader understanding of a logic based on **incentives**. Also on the level of the party organisation, members acquire **resources** through their party-related activities, especially knowledge about the organisation and skills yielded from party activity. Skills and knowledge are likely to influence young party members' future perspectives on leadership. On the individual level, the **motivational groups** developed in Chapter 6, which characterise different types of party members by linking their original joining motivation and their background, may also influence what future plans members have. Figure 7.2 illustrates the four different logics that are likely to influence the early political ambition phase, which is a prerequisite of political ambition and career building, as well as the probability to consider leaving the party.

**Attitudes and milieu ties:** The party offers its members the opportunity to express their opinions and be part of a particular political milieu. Much has been said in the literature about how these milieus are about to disappear and parties, especially mass member parties based on the working class, are losing their traditional base. It is hypothesised that the spread of post-materialism has decreased ties with these parties that were once formed along materialist cleavages (Dalton 1996; Norris 2002), and these parties are moving to the political centre to maximise their electoral base despite the disappearance of their milieus. Young members likely base their ambitions of obtaining a political career not solely on the opportunity to exert influence but also on whether the party ideologically represents them. Ideological distance between the individual and the party should lead to their withdrawal from the party or at least to less motivation for investing time and energy in a party-related career.

Ties to the traditional working class milieu should also influence how likely young members consider leaving the party because those who have weaker ties are more likely to



**Figure 7.2: Four explanatory logics of future perspectives].** The logics may explain what influences the future perspectives of young party members, ranging from being a silent member to obtaining both a party and public office. The logics build the models for the analysis. The dark arrows are investigated in the analysis, while the light arrows signal connections between the different levels.

consider party membership as only one potential opportunity among many. Therefore, the model includes measurements to assess how much a member may be distant or from party and the traditional working class party milieu. Three variables stand as proxies for this distance:

*leftright*: This variable is a 0-10 scale measuring the self-assessment between left(0) and right(10). Given that the SPD tends towards the centre-left, it can be expected that members who tend to lean towards the right are more likely to seek a career compared to those who tend to lean more towards the left.

*post-materialism*: This is a scale measuring how much a member prioritised post-materialist issues over materialist issues. The scale is an index based on a ranking of the most important political issues. It has four levels: (1) materialist, (2) mainly materialist, (3) mainly post-materialist and (4) post-materialist. The assumption is



that a higher level of post-materialism lowers the chances of being willing to start a career in the party and increases the chances of leaving the party.<sup>3</sup>

*union*: A dummy variable for being a trade union member. This dummy identifies members who may have identified with the workers' movement beyond party membership.

**Incentives**: The incentives for party membership that impact whether a member envisions a potential career should be understood as the realisation of important membership-related benefits. The dominance of normative incentives that are mainly moral-ideological did not only appear in the data in this study (see Chapter 6) but also was confirmed in a number of other studies as well (Bruter and Harrison 2009a; Laux 2011; Seyd and Whiteley 1992). Most of these incentives are difficult to grasp in terms of their effect, but the perceived, or potential, influence on the party is likely to be experienced by members after they spend some time in the party.

Influence is one of the most important incentives that a party can provide to its members (see Chapter 6). As gathered from the interviews, the young activists' main aim often was to influence the party as well, even though they disagreed with many party decisions in the past. In this examination of the influences on the likelihood of a further career, it is likely that experience in the party in terms of individual influence on party decision-making matters. This influence on party decision-making can be understood in two ways. First, influence on party decision-making can be understood as individual efficacy. Individual efficacy in the party is important, as members who believe that they have an impact on the party may consider that the incentive of having influence in the party has been realised. Second, influence on party decision-making can be understood as the opportunity for involvement. The party provides opportunities for influence. Because parties usually have a trade-off between the requirement for quick decision-making in the political process and offering opportunities for members to take part in decisions, involvement opportunities in the party should influence the members' perspectives on their future in the party.

Parties are special because they offer direct access to political decision-making in parliamentary democracies. However, normative incentives, such as acting as a respon-

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<sup>3</sup>For the creation of the index, see Appendix A.9.

sible citizen and doing something meaningful, were also important when joining the party for some young members in the survey. These incentives are not restricted to parties and can be gained through other forms of political participation. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse whether the party is the sole place for political activity for the young members or whether there are other activities as well. Three variables are included in the model that measure the different aspects of incentives:

*involvementdistance*: This variable measures the distance between an ideal state of membership involvement in parties and the perception of the current state in the SPD on a scale from -10 to 10. In each party there is a trade-off between member involvement and the requirement for quick decision-making by leaders. In the survey, members were asked to answer on a 0-10 scale (1) what they considered to be an ideal state between these two poles and (2) how they saw the current situation in the SPD. The *involvementdistance* variable measure the distance between these two values. A higher value indicates that the SPD was perceived as more hierarchical than an ideal party. The distance between the ideal state and the judgment of the SPD measures how much the member thought that the SPD was close to their own ideal of a party.

*efficacydistance*: This variable measures the difference between their personal influence on the SPD and the influence of SPD members in general. Members were asked how much influence they personally had in the party and how much influence SPD members in general had on a four-point scale. The *efficacydistance* variable measures the difference between these two values on a scale from -4 to 4. Higher numbers on the scale indicate that a party member perceives themselves as being more influential than other fellow members.

*otheractivism*: This dummy variable identifies the members who were politically active outside of the party. There are two possible types of influence. Because the members who are also active elsewhere may find other places for political activity and career building in the future, such activity could reduce the likelihood of envisioning a future career in the party. But the dummy variable could also identify activists in multiple arenas, especially when combined with a high political interest that encourages seeking a political career and building it on different pillars.

**Resources:** Resources usually refer to the standard socio-economic model of partic-

ipation that explains party membership. The logic based on resources can be applied to explain the differences in nascent political ambitions and thoughts of potentially leaving the party among the young party members. However, it requires some adjustments. Resources in this sense must be understood as the additional resources that a member might acquire from their party membership. Usually, these additional resources are skills and knowledge that were developed as a result of membership in the party. Knowledge important for expecting a party-related career focuses on the opportunities for careers and what steps must be taken as preparation. For young party members, it is likely that they acquire this knowledge as they become active in the party, meet party officials and start building networks. Furthermore, members who are already in an elected position gain knowledge that is helpful in deciding whether a further career is likely, even if it is only on the local level.

*Incumbent:* This is a dummy variable that shows if a member is currently holding any elected position in the party. The incumbency in the party organisation measures the expected impact of party experience on relevant knowledge and skills. It is expected that members who already hold an elected position are more likely to believe that they will have a position in the future as well.

**General motivation:** Differences in general motivations of being a party member are likely to influence whether a member envisions a future career. It can be expected that members' that were motivated to join because they sought personal benefits are more likely to seek a career. To account for the different motivational groups of young party members that were identified in Chapter 6, they are also included in the model.

*Motivational groups of party members (Latent classes):* The model includes a factor that represents the three motivational groups of party members based on the typology developed in Chapter 6. Recall that there are the *Take All* members who had a variety of motivations to become a party member, the *Ideologists* who emphasised moral-ideological and some social incentives over professional incentives and the *Reluctants* who did not consider any incentives as important. The group of ideologists is likely less intrigued with the idea of a party career than the members in the *Take All* type who also accepted professional incentives.

The model also controls for the typical factors in political participation, which are

gender (a dummy variable for women) and education in years as well as the duration of party membership in years. Table 7.1 contains an overview of the descriptors of all covariates.

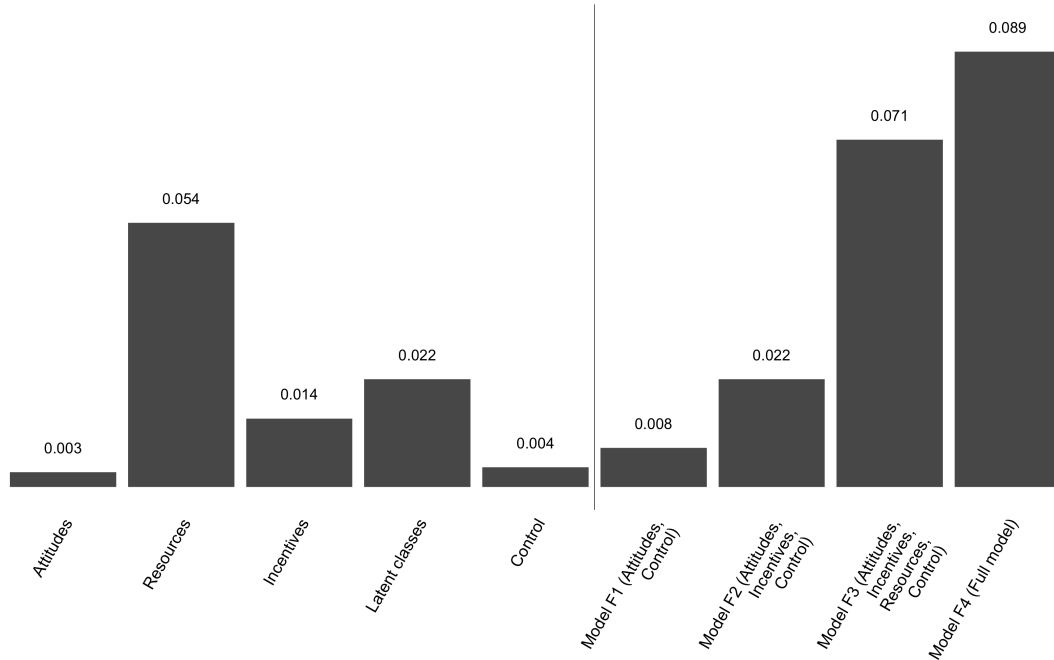
| Variable                                    | Name                | Min. | Max. | Mean  | Median |
|---|---------------------|------|------|-------|--------|
| <i>Metric variables</i>                     |                     |      |      |       |        |
| Left-Right Scale                            | leftright           | 0    | 10   | 3.03  | 3      |
| Post-materialism index                      | postmaterialism     | 1    | 4    | 2.2   | 2      |
| Involvement distance                        | involvementdistance | -8   | 10   | 2.69  | 3      |
| Efficacy distance                           | efficacydistance    | -3   | 1    | -0.57 | -0.5   |
| Membership duration                         | duration            | 1    | 21   | 5.58  | 5      |
| Education in years                          | education           | 9    | 30   | 16.27 | 16     |
| <i>Dummy variables</i>                      |                     |      |      |       |        |
| Union member                                | union               | 0    | 1    | 0.29  | 0      |
| Other activism                              | otheractivism       | 0    | 1    | 0.34  | 0      |
| Incumbency                                  | incumbent           | 0    | 1    | 0.38  | 0      |
| Women                                       | women               | 0    | 1    | 0.26  | 0      |
| <i>Motivational groups (Latent classes)</i> |                     |      |      |       |        |
| Take All                                    | 49.4%               |      |      |       |        |
| Ideologists                                 | 39.7%               |      |      |       |        |
| Reluctants                                  | 11%                 |      |      |       |        |

**Table 7.1: Descriptive analysis of the covariates** for the regression analysis, range of values, mean and median. N=4006.

## 7.2 Envisioning a Career in the Party in the Future

The first step of this analysis seeks to understand how young party members envision their future in the party and what influences the likelihood that they perceive the opportunity to pursue a career path in the party. First, how much explanatory power each of the four individual logics has is examined. A comparison of four models, one for each logic, shows that the model using resources of party membership provides the highest explanatory power, followed by the model using the motivational groups of

party members. The model based on the realisation of incentives provides an even lower explanatory power. The model on attitudes and milieu ties and the model using only the control variables provide only a small explanatory power (Figure 7.3).



**Figure 7.3: Comparing the explanatory power of four logics of future career perspectives.**  $R^2$  (adjusted, McFadden) results from multinomial logistic regression analysis of the models using single logics and the step-by-step combination of the logics. Dependent variable: future position as a factor of (0) none, (1) elected SPD position, (2) position in government or public office, (3) both.

Because the four different logics are based on distinct aspects that do not necessary overlap, it is expected that they complement each other. Combining these logics into one single model should therefore increase its explanatory power. Table 7.2 shows the results of the regression analysis combining the four logics step-by-step into one model (Model F4). The step-by-step approach follows a logic based on causality. It is expected that attitudes and milieu ties are the most general influence factors (Model F1). Adding incentive logic into the model does not change the effects of the former variables (Model F2), but the explanatory power of this model increases. Including the resource logic into the model reveals that some other aspects no longer have significant effects. This hints at possible interrelations between the incentive and resource logics capture some aspects that the attitudes and milieu ties variables measure. Here, the explanatory power of the model increases by a considerable amount (Model F3). Adding the motivational groups of party members, measured by the latent classes variable, makes the model have more

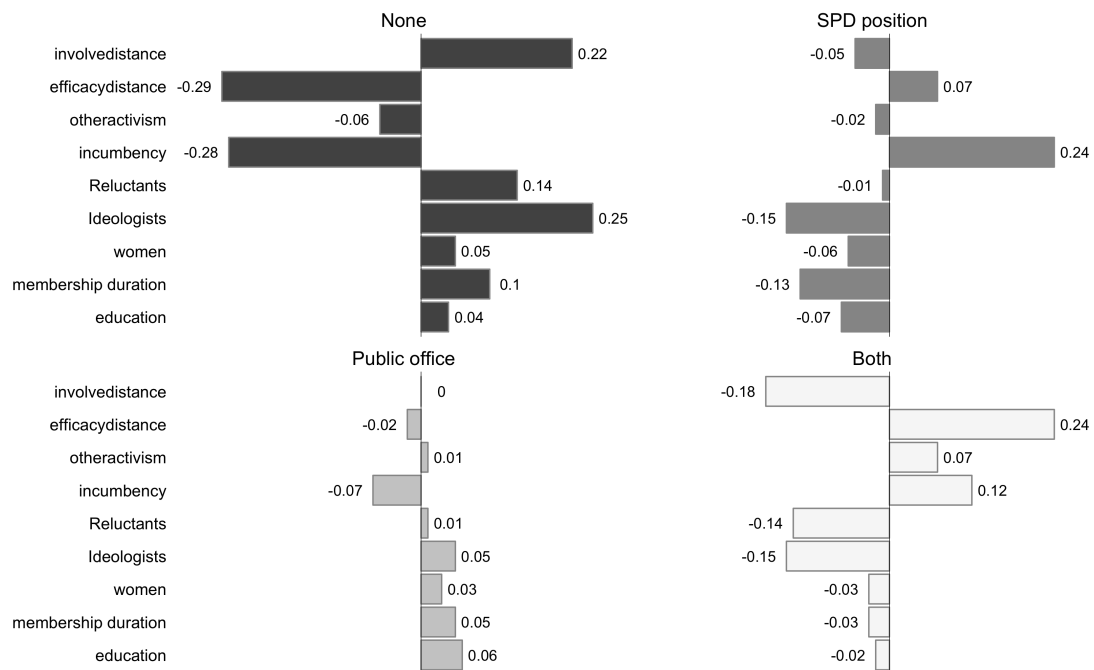
explanatory power. Adding the latent classes improves the model from 0.07 to almost 0.09 adjusted  $R^2$ . This increase means that the typology serves well to understand the future perspectives of the young party members. The full model, including all logics and the control variables, has the best explanatory power (Model F4). This model is further discussed in the following.

Table 7.2 shows the regression coefficients and significance levels for all models. To make the results of the logistic regression more readable, the probabilities for each value of the dependent variable are compared with the minimum and maximum of the significant independent variables (Figure 7.4).<sup>4</sup> As these effects depend on the proportion of the group within the population, the composition of the groups within those with minimum and maximum values on the independent variables with the strongest effects are examined (Figure 7.5).

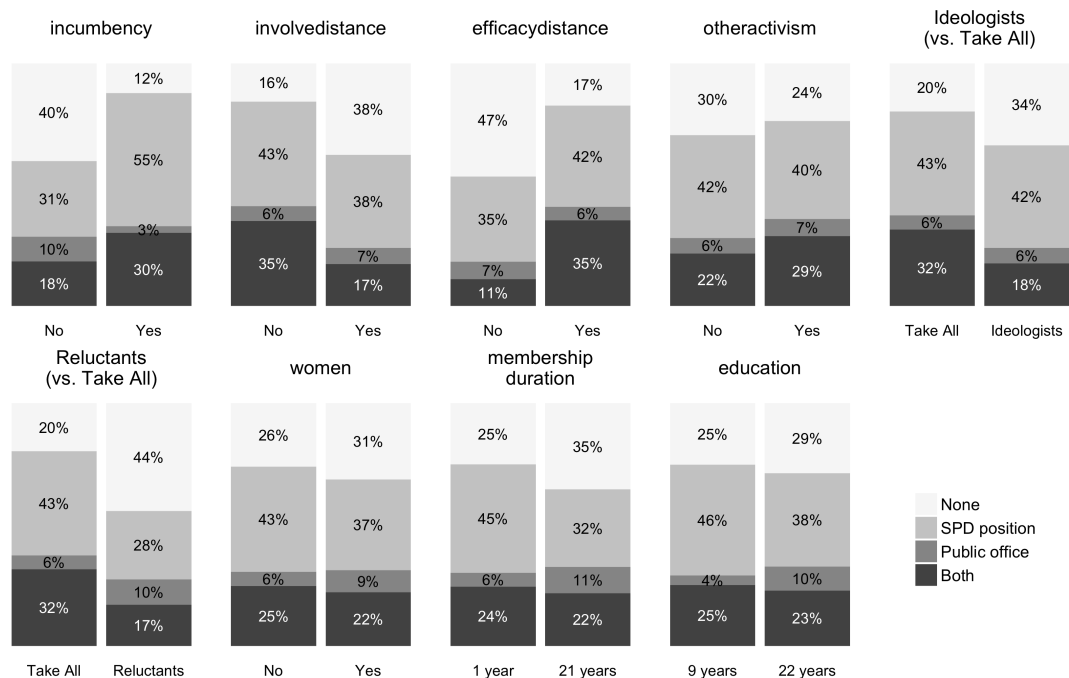
Members who focused solely on the possibility of a party position can be seen as tentative career seekers. Obtaining an elected position within the party could be relatively easy, at least on the local level, and it might be an achievable goal. Only considering a party position does not rule out future perspectives on seeking a career in public office or a government position, but that was beyond the scope of these young members at the time of the survey. Making up more than one third of the sample, this is the biggest group among the young party members. The young members who believed they could obtain both an elected party position and a public office within the next ten years make up one fourth of all young members. They can be identified as ambitious career seekers because they did not only focus their career ambitions within the party but also in broader political decision-making areas in the parliamentary system.

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<sup>4</sup>The effects of the covariates for each value between the minimum and maximum can be found in Figure C.1 in the appendix on page 297.



**Figure 7.4: Change of probabilities for the different future perspectives at minimum and maximum of independent variables (Model F5).** Only variables with significant effects are included. The variables measure the probability to obtain a certain position within the next ten years. All other variables are kept at mean. Reading example: The probability to envision both a public and a party position of the least active members is 21% lower than of the most active members.



**Figure 7.5: Composition of groups at the minimum and maximum of the independent variables (Model F5).** Only variables with significant effects are included. The left bar shows the results for the minimum value, the right bar shows the results for the maximum value. All other variables are kept at mean. Reading example: The least active members answered 53% none, 27% SPD position, 10% public office and 11% both, the most active members answered 15% none, 48% SPD position, 5% public office and 32% both.

|  | Model F1     |                   |                    | Model F2           |                   |                    | Model F3          |                   |          | Model F4           |                    |                    |
|--|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | SPD position | Public office     | Both               | SPD position       | Public office     | Both               | SPD position      | Public office     | Both     | SPD position       | Public office      | Both               |
| Intercept  | 0.89***      | -2.66***          | 0.16               | 1.38***            | -2.45***          | 0.78**             | 0.84***           | -2.4***           | 0.28     | 0.92***            | -2.32***           | 0.4                |
| <i>Attitudes and milieu ties</i>                                       |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          |                    |                    |                    |
| leftright  | 0            | 0.08 <sup>+</sup> | 0.06**             | -0.01              | 0.06              | 0.05               | -0.03             | 0.06              | 0.03     | -0.02              | 0.06               | 0.03               |
| postmateri-<br>alism   | 0            | -0.05             | 0.02               | 0.01               | -0.06             | 0.01               | 0.04              | -0.06             | 0.04     | 0.04               | -0.06              | 0.05               |
| union  | 0.44***      | 0.24              | 0.48***            | 0.37***            | 0.17              | 0.32***            | 0.19 <sup>+</sup> | 0.18              | 0.15     | 0.19 <sup>+</sup>  | 0.18               | 0.17               |
| <i>Incentives: Benefits of party membership</i>                        |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          |                    |                    |                    |
| efficacydis-<br>tance  |              |                   |                    | 0.54***            | 0.15              | 0.78***            | 0.31***           | 0.18              | 0.56***  | 0.29***            | 0.18               | 0.54***            |
| involve-<br>mentdistance   |              |                   |                    | -0.05***           | -0.05**           | -0.08***           | -0.05***          | -0.05**           | -0.09*** | -0.06***           | -0.04 <sup>+</sup> | -0.09***           |
| otherac-<br>tivism   |              |                   |                    | 0.18**             | 0.32**            | 0.51***            | 0.18 <sup>+</sup> | 0.32**            | 0.5***   | 0.17 <sup>+</sup>  | 0.33**             | 0.5***             |
| <i>Resources: Acquired knowledge and skills</i>                        |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          |                    |                    |                    |
| incumbent  |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    | 1.76***           | -0.14             | 1.66***  | 1.76***            | -0.12              | 1.68***            |
| <i>Motivational groups (Latent classes, Reference group: Take All)</i> |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          |                    |                    |                    |
| Ideologists  |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          | -0.55***           | -0.43***           | -1.12***           |
| Reluctants   |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          | -1.22***           | -0.22              | -1.43***           |
| <i>Control</i>   |              |                   |                    |                    |                   |                    |                   |                   |          |                    |                    |                    |
| education  | -0.04***     | 0.06**            | -0.04**            | -0.04***           | 0.06**            | -0.04**            | -0.04**           | 0.05**            | -0.04**  | -0.02 <sup>+</sup> | 0.06***            | -0.02              |
| women  | -0.01        | 0.01              | -0.01              | -0.02 <sup>+</sup> | 0.01              | -0.02 <sup>+</sup> | -0.04***          | 0.01              | -0.04*** | -0.33***           | 0.26 <sup>+</sup>  | -0.3**             |
| duration   | -0.23**      | 0.29**            | -0.17 <sup>+</sup> | -0.26***           | 0.27 <sup>+</sup> | -0.22**            | -0.3***           | 0.27 <sup>+</sup> | -0.26**  | -0.03***           | 0.01               | -0.02 <sup>+</sup> |
| $R^2$ (McFad-<br>den, adjusted)  | 0.01         |                   |                    | 0.02               |                   |                    | 0.07              |                   |          | 0.09               |                    |                    |
| Correctly pre-<br>dicted   | 67%          |                   |                    | 67%                |                   |                    | 69%               |                   |          | 70%                |                    |                    |

**Table 7.2: Regression results of four models that explain future perspectives** Coefficients of multinomial logistic regression models, significance levels: \*\*\* < 0.001, \*\* < 0.01, \* < 0.05, + < 0.1. Dependent variable is the factor on whether the member considered it likely within the next ten years to obtain an elected position within the party, a public office or government position for the party, both or none (reference group). See table C.1, Appendix for regression diagnostics.



The strongest effect on both tentative and ambitious career seekers is *efficacydistance*. This variable was a measurement for the difference between the efficacy that SPD members in general have and the young members' own efficacy in the party. The members who perceived themselves to have the most influence compared to other members as being 25% more likely to envision a career in the party. While this influence on both groups is similar on both types of career seekers, the effect of *incumbency* is different among these groups. The incumbents were much more likely to see themselves as future incumbents, but they were less sure if this position would be in public office or government. It is reasonable that obtaining a public office or government position with the help of the party is less likely than obtaining an elected position within the party, and members who were already "in the system" seem to have recognised that.

Another strong effect that increases the probability for being an ambitious career seeker is the *involvementdistance*. This variable measures the difference between an ideal party and the SPD in terms of the trade-off between member involvement and leadership decision-making. While its effect on seeking a party position is not very strong, the effect is very strong on developing ambitious career plans. The likelihood of seeking both a public and party office doubles when the SPD is close to the ideal state of inner democracy. This does not seem to be too surprising. But the effect on the tentative career seekers requires more attention. There is only a little difference between members who thought the SPD was much more hierarchical than a party should be and members who felt that member involvement in the SPD was very good; they are almost equally likely to run for a party position. Thus, seeking a party office does not seem to be unattractive for members who do not feel that the party fits its purpose regarding the involvement of members.

The members who opted only for public office without considering seeking an elected position in the party can be interpreted in different ways. They obviously opted for a very unlikely future. Two interpretations of this decision are possible: they either may have not been familiar with the "hidden rules" that make it rather unlikely to obtain a position in public office or government without a party office, or they may not have liked this connection and aimed to overcome it. The latter would imply that they were more interested in a public office or government position that offers political

influence (and most likely remuneration) than in the opportunity to influence the party organisation. Such an interpretation would also be in line with the pragmatic and instrumental relationship that some young activists expressed in the interviews (see Chapter 5).

The results of the regression model support a mixture of both explanations of considering public office but not party office. The only public office seekers were more highly educated, and they were more often members for a long time. Regarding their motivations, they were more often among the *Reluctant* members in the party. This hints at the second explanation. At the same time, they were less often already elected to a party position and thus may have had less access to knowledge and skills within the party. They may also have been those members who have the least knowledge about informal requirements for career paths in and outside of the party and the hidden rules of the organisation.

The members without any career plans are the largest group among those who perceived themselves to be influential in the party. Not surprisingly, they were often not in an elected position. The *involvementdistance* is also important in explaining this group. Members who perceived the SPD to be much more hierarchical in decision-making than their ideal party were likely to have no career plans. The *Reluctant* members were also very likely to be among the members with no career ambitions. This group of young party members can be summed up as a group that felt that they did not have much say in the party.

This model has variables that stand as proxies for developments on three different levels. The variables that stand as proxies for political attitudes and potential ties to the social-democratic and working class milieu have no significant effects on different career perspectives, once the variables that proxy party-level aspects are included. While the Model F1 still shows significant effects of union membership and the left-right positioning, this changes when the proxies for the realisation of membership benefits and for acquired knowledge are included (Model F3, see Table 7.2).

The motivational groups identified in Chapter 6 serve as good indicators to predict the probability for career seeking. The explanatory power of the model increases when this logic of motivational groups is added, and there are no differences in significance.

Thus, these motivational latent classes explain the future perspectives of the young members as well as their experiences in the party (Model F4 vs. Model F5). In Chapter 6, the *Reluctant* membership group did not consider any of the typical party membership incentives as important. According to this model, these members are also most likely to have no future career plans. They are more than twice as likely to have envisioned neither public nor party office than the members who were attached to all potential incentives (*Take All* type). The *Ideologists* that were different from the reference group in that they did not adhere to professional incentives are also more likely to have had no future career prospects, but they are similar with the *Take All* members in that they envisioned an elected party position. The *Take All* members are different in that they have the highest probability of envisioning a party career as well as a public office or government position, with the latter providing most likely not only influence in the party but also potential material benefits. These results further shape the motivational groups. The *Take All* members were indeed more career-focused and accepted the party as an opportunity for individual benefits, while the *Reluctants* were those members who were least integrated into the party. The *Ideologists* were somewhat in between these two types of members: They were prone to having influence in the party but tended to reject the individual benefits that the party might be able to offer them.

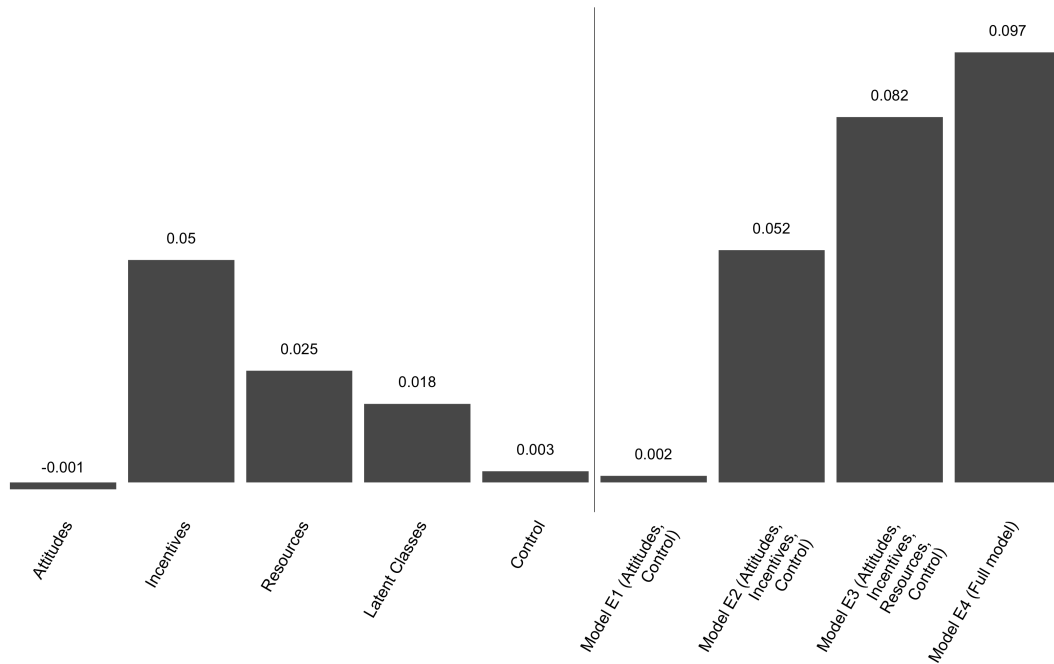
Lastly, what the effects of the control variables can explain is examined. The effect of gender is considerably small. Women were a bit more likely to opt for no future position and a bit less likely to think of a party position or both a party position and public office or government position, but differences are small. The duration of membership has an interesting effect. The more recent members had a very high chance of envisioning a party position, but the long-term members were more likely to have no career plans. There seems to be a demotivating effect during the party membership that makes members less interested in running for party positions the longer they are involved in the party. Education has an effect on whether a member envisions a public office or not. Members who were more highly educated were more likely to opt only for a public office rather than a party office. This could suggest that the more highly educated members also more actively seek an individual career in politics without caring so much for the party organisation while the less educated career seekers envision a party career

as more realistic. But these results must be interpreted carefully. Because many of the young members surveyed were still in their educational processes, the lower number of educational years may change for many members.

The analysis of the future career perspectives can be summarised as follows: The analysis shows that general societal level factors are not important, but the factors that occur on the party level and the individual motivational setting matter. The efficacy compared to other members, how much the party fits a member's idea of a party and the experience as an incumbent determine, to a large extent, what kind of career a member considers within reach. The analysis also further shapes the motivational latent classes and shows their impact on the difference between members who find it likely to obtain a public position and members who focus solely on internal party positions. The results confirm that the *Take All* type may be a group of "power seekers" who tend to take what the party offers them. There is another group of members that is more ideological; they seek party office but are more tentative when it comes to benefits that they could personally enjoy. Lastly, there are party members with not much interest in any position.

### 7.3 Considering to Leave the Party

In the next step, I analyse who is likely to leave the party. The same four logics of influence are applied as in the analysis above. The explanatory power of the different logics shows a different pattern than the case of the future career perspectives. The low explanatory power of the logic of attitudes is similar to the previous analysis. But resources are less powerful and incentives are more powerful in explaining who is likely to leave the party. Adding the logics in the same causal step-by-step approach as in the model for future career perspectives similarly increases the explanatory power step-by-step (Figure 7.6). Again, adding the latent classes from Chapter 6 to the model enlarges the explanatory power significantly from 0.082 to 0.097 (Model E3 and E4).



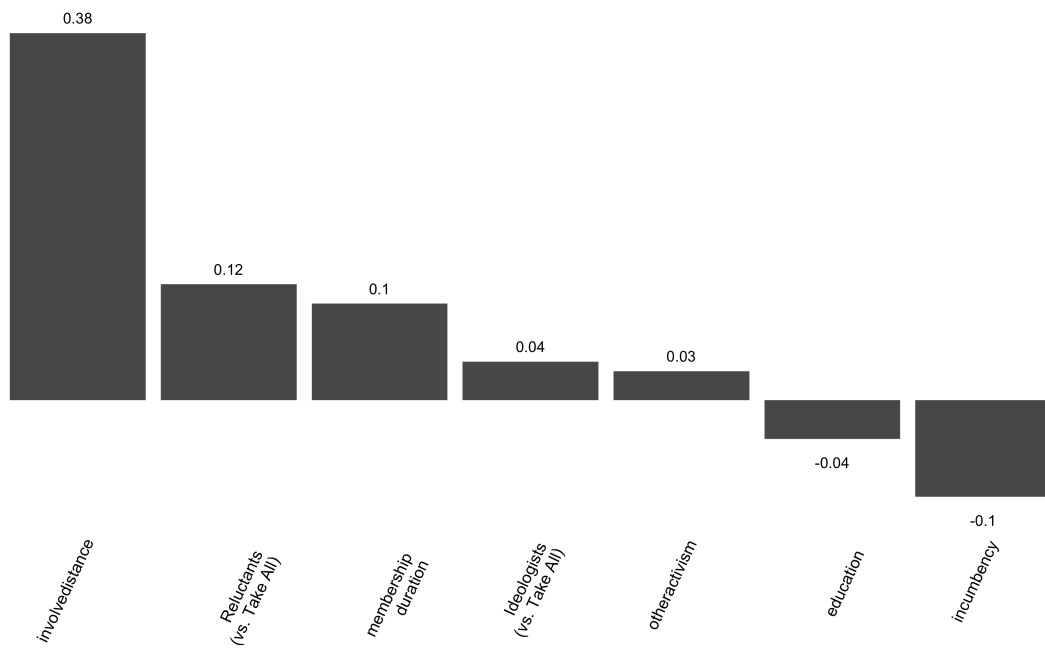
**Figure 7.6: Comparing the explanatory power of four logics of exit likelihood.**  $R^2$  (adjusted, McFadden) results from binomial logistic regression analysis of different models. The dependent variable is finding it likely to leave the party within the next ten years.

The change in significance for coefficients over the course of combining the logics into one model can be seen in Table 7.3. There is a similar pattern for the significance as in the case of the future career perspectives. The coefficients that proxy milieu ties do not distinguish between the members who may potentially leave and the members who will likely stay. The variables on the party organisation level are significant for this distinction. Again, the latent classes also provide a significant division between a

potential exit and stay. Model E4, which has the best explanatory power, is based on all four all logics and the control variables.

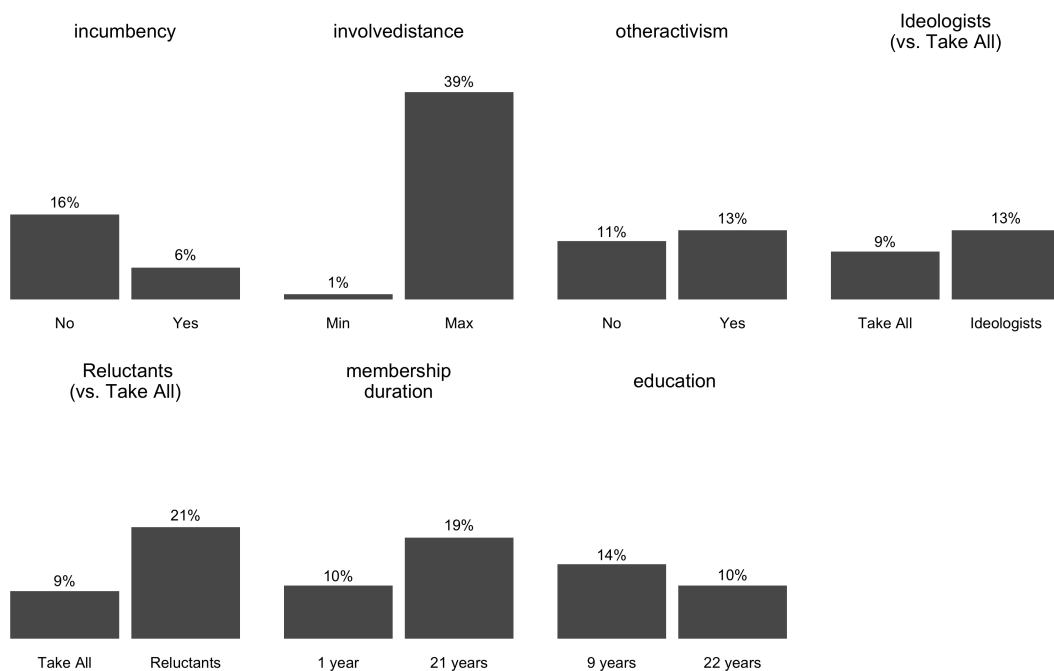
|  | Model E1 | Model E2 | Model E3 | Model E4           | Model E5          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Intercept  | -1.64*** | -2.82*** | -2.42*** | -2.49***           | -1.44***          |
| <i>Attitudes and milieu ties</i>                                       |          |          |          |                    |                   |
| leftright  | -0.03    | 0.06*    | 0.07*    | 0.06 <sup>+</sup>  | -0.02             |
| postmaterial-<br>ism   | 0.05     | 0.04     | 0.02     | 0.02               | 0.02              |
| union  | -0.09    | -0.24*   | -0.12    | -0.12              | -0.02             |
| <i>Incentives: Benefits of party membership</i>                        |          |          |          |                    |                   |
| efficacydis-<br>tance  |          | -0.14    | 0.04     | 0.06               | 0.16 <sup>+</sup> |
| involvement-<br>distance   |          | 0.21***  | 0.22***  | 0.22***            |                   |
| otheractivism  |          | 0.2*     | 0.22*    | 0.24*              | 0.3**             |
| <i>Resources: acquired knowledge and skills</i>                        |          |          |          |                    |                   |
| incumbent  |          |          | -1.07*** | -1.04***           | -1.02***          |
| <i>Motivational groups (Latent classes; reference class: Take All)</i> |          |          |          |                    |                   |
| Ideologists  |          |          |          | 0.45***            | 0.5***            |
| Reluctants   |          |          |          | 1.02***            | 0.95***           |
| <i>Control</i>   |          |          |          |                    |                   |
| women  | -0.17    | -0.14    | -0.14    | -0.12              | -0.17             |
| duration   | -0.02    | -0.01    | -0.01    | 0.04**             | 0.05***           |
| education  | 0.04***  | 0.03**   | 0.05***  | -0.03 <sup>+</sup> | -0.04*            |
| $R^2$ (McFadden,<br>adj.)  | 0.02     | 0.05     | 0.08     | 0.1                | 0.05              |
| Correctly pre-<br>dicted   | 75%      | 77%      | 77%      | 78%                | 76%               |

**Table 7.3: Regression results of four models that explain exit likelihood.** Regression coefficients of binomial logistic regression and significance levels: \*\*\* < 0.001, \*\* < 0.01, \* < 0.05, + < 0.1. The dependent variable is a dummy variable on whether the member considered it likely within the next ten years to leave the party.



**Figure 7.7: [Exit likelihood at the minimum and maximum of the independent variables].**

All other variables are kept at mean. The graphic shows only predictors with significant effects. Reading example: The probability to leave the party within ten years decreases on average by 10% between the incumbents and those not in any elected position in the party.



**Figure 7.8: Size of the group that is likely to leave at minimum and maximum of the independent variables.** All other variables are kept at mean. The graphic shows only predictors with significant effects. Reading example: 6% of the members who were incumbents are likely to leave the party compared to 16% of those who were not in any elected position.

A comparison of the probability to be within the exit group (members who consider it likely to leave the party within ten years) between the minimum and the maximum values of the variables in the model shows the strengths of the effects (Figure 7.7) and the composition of likely exit and unlikely exit (Figure 7.8).<sup>5</sup> The effect of the *involvementdistance* is striking. This measurement of the difference in membership involvement between an ideal type of a party and the reality in the SPD has the strongest effect on the probability to leave. The members that saw the biggest negative difference<sup>6</sup> between their ideal type of how members should be involved in the party and how the situation was in the SPD are most likely to leave. This confirms the relevance of influence as the most important incentive for party membership, and it makes it more specific: While the future career perspectives were strongly influenced by the *efficacydistance*, this is not relevant for thoughts about leaving. The level of possible involvement that the party allows, not individual influence compared to other members, determines whether a member is confident with their party or not. Young members seem to be likely to leave the party if they have the feeling that it is not possible to exert influence on the party, mainly because the party does not allow it due to structural reasons.

The second most important factor is whether the members belonged to the motivational group of the *Reluctants*. *Reluctants* were the members in the survey who did not consider any of the typical incentives as important to them. In Chapter 6, it was speculated that *Reluctants* are the members who are already on their way out of the party. These results confirm that assumption. More than one fifth of this type of members is likely to leave the party in the near future, compared to 12% of the *Ideologists* and only 8% of the *Take All* group. Current *incumbency* has a similarly strong effect. Incumbents are less likely to leave the party. This is not very surprising, as activity in the party has been proven to be of great relevance for leaving the party in previous studies about this topic (wagner2016; Dose, Fischer and Golla 2016; Rohrbach 2011). Although one could argue that the frustration – and therefore the likelihood of leaving

<sup>5</sup>The effects of each covariate for its value between minimum and maximum can be found in Figure C.2, Appendix.

<sup>6</sup>Negative difference means that the SPD tends more to leadership decision-making while the member would like to have more involvement. In other words, the party is more hierarchical than the member wants it to be. Positive difference would mean that the party is less hierarchical than the member's ideal type of a party.



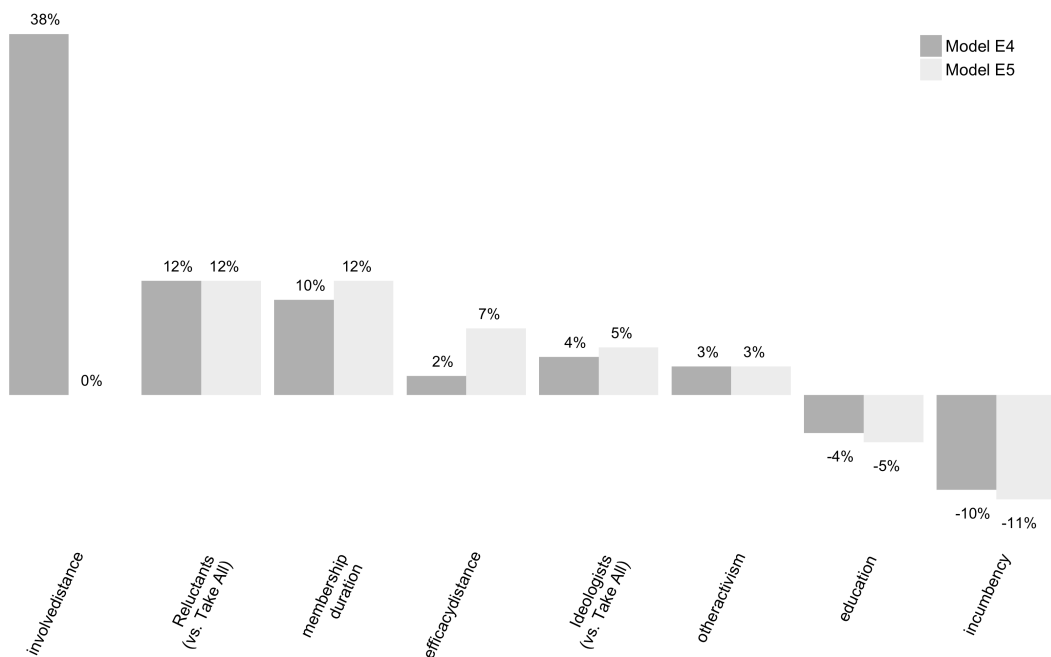
– could increase for members who are active because they are in more direct contact with the party, this is not confirmed by the data. It seems that members who invest time into party activity are also more attached to the party and less vulnerable in terms of their membership.

Controlling for *education* and *duration* of membership reveals that both factors have effects on the probability to leave the party. Longer durations of memberships increase the likelihood of thinking about leaving. This shows that members seem to give the party some time after they joined before considering potentially leaving the party. However, it also means that members who have belonged to the party for some time are less bound to the party than recent joiners. *Education* has the reverse effect. The longer a member spent in educational processes, the less likely it is for them to leave. This could hint at a greater volatility among less educated members and could help explain the unequal representation of highly educated members in parties (Biehl 2005; Persson 2014; Seyd and Whiteley 1992). Again, these results require careful interpretation. Many of the young members were still in their educational processes, so the number of years in the survey does not say much about the level of education members will ultimately complete.

The extraordinarily strong effect of the *involvementdistance* suggests a possible endogeneity problem in the model. The *involvementdistance* might measure estrangement from the party, which might be a similar as an increased likelihood of leaving. A non-endogenous interpretation would mean that this aspect of estrangement is most important to explain leaving thoughts. In order to answer this question, a model without the involvement distance is applied and the change of effects on the covariates between those two models, the full model E4 and model E5 without the *involvementdistance* variable, is analysed (Table 7.3).

The exclusion of *involvementdistance* slightly changes the effects of the other predictors. In terms of the significance of effects, the *efficacydistance*, or the distance between a member's perceived efficacy in influencing the party compared to other party members, becomes significant, but only on the 0.1 level. The strength of effects is not strong when *involvementdistance* is excluded from the model. Figure 7.9 shows the difference in the exit likelihood between the minimum and maximum of the covariates for both

model E4, the full model, and the model E5 without the covariate *involvementdistance*.<sup>7</sup> It shows that the effects of *duration*, *education* and *incumbency* are reduced by including *involvementdistance* into the model. The change in effects is rather small, with the highest impact on the effect of membership duration, which is reduced by 16%. Thus, the results allow for the conclusion that the strong effect of *involvementdistance* in model E4 is not a result of endogeneity that hides the effects of other factors. It seems that perceiving that the party fits the personal ideal of democratic involvement that such an organisation should have strongly reduces the likelihood of leaving the party



**Figure 7.9: Exit likelihood between the minimum and maximum of covariates**, comparing the significant effects in model E4 and E5. All other variables are kept at mean. The graphic shows only predictors with significant effects, but note that *efficacydistance* is not significant in Model E4 and only significant on the 0.1 level in Model E5.

The analysis of the potential leavers of the party can be summarised as follows: The general attitudes and milieu ties do not play a role in whether a member is likely to leave the party or not. This result is similar to the analysis of the future perspectives. The most important factor in preventing young members from considering leaving the party is confidence in the way the party involves members in decision-making. If how the party involves members is close to what the members expects, this dramatically reduces

<sup>7</sup>The effects of the covariates for each value between minimum and maximum for model E5 can be found in Figure C.3, Appendix.

the likelihood that they leave the party to almost zero. Furthermore, the analysis shows that some members are almost on their way out of the party; these members are the *Reluctants* who were already resistant to most of the incentives that the party offers.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, the future perspectives of the young party members are analysed. Four logics are used to explain why a young person may have certain plans for their party-related future in order to understand who among young party members plans a future career with the party and who may potentially leave. The influence factors measured aspects on the general societal level, on the party organisation level and individual predispositions. The analysis of influence factors for young party members' future perspectives in the survey can be summarised as follows: The general attitudes and political milieu ties were not very influential for the future perspectives of young party members. Their experiences in the party mattered. Integration into the party as an incumbent and especially how much the party fit the member's needs regarding membership involvement were important factors in predicting what kind of political future these young members envisioned.

This analysis identifies potential "power seekers" (Lasswell 1948, 20) among young party members. These power seekers, or future career seekers, were influenced by factors that were rooted in their experience of the day-to-day reality in the party. They agreed that the party succeeded at allowing for the involvement of members compared to an ideal state of a party. And they perceived themselves as more effective in influencing the party compared to other party members. This shows that the *perceived* influence on the party matters for young members most when they plan their further involvement in the party. Differences between these career seekers show that there are two types of career seekers: "Tentative career seekers" who envisioned an elected position only within the party and "ambitious career seekers" who believed they would be able to obtain a public office or a government position as well. Already being elected to a position in the party widened young party members' future perspectives towards more tentative career seeking. This shows that the members gained experience through their involvement in

the party. The majority of incumbents planned to continue and advance their career. This means that once a step towards an elected position is taken, the young members are very likely to develop an active future in the party.

The nascent alienation of the party also is rooted in involvement within the party organisation. The analysis of the potential leavers reveals that the young party members were willing to test the party out. After some years of membership, the likelihood of leaving rises. This supports the assumption that experiences of the party reality matter a great deal. If the party had not met their expectations for influence, young members were likely to leave. Their disappointment with opportunities for influence, measured as the difference between their ideal party and the SPD reality, was the strongest predictor for leaving thoughts among the members surveyed. The young party members who join the party seem to give the party a chance to fulfill their expectations, but if they cannot exert adequate influence, parties cannot count on their support in the future.

This analysis also contributes to the understanding of the motivational latent classes of young party members. The group of *Reluctants*, defined in Chapter 6 mainly negatively by their absence of motives, proved to be strongly distanced from their party. They were not very interested in obtaining a future position in the party, and their probability to leave in the future is comparably high. The group of *Reluctants* seems to comprise those members who were already on their way out, which could explain why they were not interested in the potential benefits of their party membership. The difference between the *Take All* members and the group of *Ideologists* is better understood, as well. These two motivational types of members can be linked with the two types of career seekers. The *Ideologists* were much more focused on a party-related career than on public office. This makes them rather *tentative career seekers*. The *Take All* members sought both party and public office. They are more *ambitious career seekers*. This fits with the main difference in their motivations: Public office or a government position provides more individual benefits than a party position, which is usually not a "profession" but mostly voluntary work that requires a high level of idealism. The divide between the two motivational groups along the question of professional benefits also applies to their future perspectives.

The developments in professionalised parties show that they tend towards more cen-

tralised decision-making in the hands of the party leadership. The analysis shows that centralised decision-making makes young members less likely to pursue active engagement in the party. The majority of the young members were positive about their own future as an actively engaged member. Less than one third could not envision any future party or public position, and the potential leavers were clearly in the minority. This is generally a good sign for the parties, as it shows that most young members who join a party are motivated to stay and to engage. But the analysis also shows that there are some clear indicators that make it less likely that a young member will engage in the party. Only those members who are confident with the current state of the party might seek further engagement. If the party offers only limited opportunities for involvement in decision-making, it is likely that such a party will only attract and retain the young members who are confident with only little influence on decision-making. These are aspects that parties themselves can change. The more *democratic* a party is, which is understood as providing meaningful influence opportunities for members, the more likely it is that the young members have nascent political ambitions and the less likely it is that they leave.

Previous research indicated that young party members are less attached to their party in general than older members (Rohrbach 2011). This conclusion cannot be confirmed in this analysis because different age groups are not compared. But I argue that professionalised parties are not well off if they expect that unhappy young members will stay on board. Based on this analysis of the future perspectives of young members, it is obvious that extending influence opportunities to young party members can increase their likelihood of staying. Increasing influence opportunities is also likely to engage young people and encourage them to take office, thereby keeping the party alive.

## Chapter 8

# Summary and Conclusions

This work seeks to understand what happens when young people join institutions of old politics. The analysis takes the individual perspective of the young party members in a traditional, yet professionalised party, using rich and original qualitative and quantitative data from members of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) up to the age of 35 years. It aims to understand the decisive aspects of a party member's life: The process of joining with a focus on the incentives and resources, the experience of active party members and the members' perspectives on their future within or outside the party. This final chapter summarises the empirical results of the three research questions and discusses their implications for the future of political parties.

The analysis shows that there is not a typical young party member. The results of the interviews and surveys reveal heterogeneity among the young party members. They were not only distinct in what made them join the party, but they also had different future plans and a different likelihood to stay in the party. Parties, especially former catch-all parties as "encompassing organisations" (Olson 1965; Olson 1986), seek to govern society as a whole. This means that they have to compromise between contradicting interests and groups in their policies and structures. Being a member in such a party includes accepting decisions that the individual member may not like or make themselves. The decisive distinction between the types of the young members in this study was how much they were willing to accept compromises that do not fit with their vision of an ideal party. They differed in how much they were willing to accept structures and leadership decisions in times of discontent for the benefit of being part of an organisation that

offers access to political power. If that is typical for young party members in general, it has strong implications for the future composition of party membership.

There were three types of young party members in this study. The *ambitious career seekers* were motivated by social, professional and moral-ideological incentives. They were rather uncritical towards the leadership and were confident with the influence that the party offered them. They strongly believed in their own efficacy within the party and sought both party and public office. The *tentative ideologists* were the second type. They disregarded professional motivations when joining the party and were instead motivated ideologically and by the idea of meeting like-minded others. They were critical towards the party, but they still believed that they participated well within the party. They did not believe that the party works well, but they were convinced that they personally had some influence and wanted to use their influence possibly in party office, but not in public office. The third type of a young party member was either a *reluctant silent member* or a *soon-to-be leaver*. These members were not motivated by the classical incentives of party membership, and they seemed severely disappointed by the lack of influence that the party structures provide. They had often been members for several years already, but many of them thought about leaving in the near future. For the party, this means that the most conforming and uncritical young members are likely to stay and hold future office positions while the potential critics are likely to leave. Such a development may make the party more unified internally but probably also less appealing to different groups in a heterogeneous society.

The theoretical framework of the work combines explanatory logics on three different levels: On the societal level, the well-known developments of individualisation and value change caused a reduction in the importance of political milieus and classic cleavages. These developments are considered to be the cause for the decline of parties that developed along societal cleavages. On the party organisation level, theories of party change explain the response of parties to the loss of their membership bases. Due to the centralisation and professionalisation of their structures, parties have become more oriented towards campaigns and have adaptable ideologies. These developments are likely to have a severe impact on how members can benefit from their party membership. Developments both in society and the party possibly influence individual motivations

and experiences of party members. This work investigates party members' resources and motivations for membership on the level of the individual in order to analyse the impact of developments on the societal and party level.

The analysis is based on a unique and rich set of qualitative and quantitative data. First, semi-structured interviews offer insights into how young SPD activists rationalise their joining process and their party-related experiences. This step adds a rare perspective to the analysis of motives and resources for party membership. The interviews make it possible to see if the common resource- and incentive-based explanations can be confirmed for the specific group of young party members, and they highlight the interplay between these explanations. The interview data also allows for the analysis of day-to-day experiences in the party from the perspective of young people who are active members. The analysis helps to understand whether the well-analysed organisational change of parties plays a role in the experiences of young party activists. Second, a full population survey among all young SPD members provides the data for the large-scale analysis of these young party members. Based on the data set, it is possible to identify three motivational types of young party members with very different characteristics. The types include very heterogeneously motivated members and members who were not interested in the classic benefits of membership. I also use the data set to better understand what made young members plan a party-related career and what might cause them to leave the party, which confirms that the different types of members had very different goals for their future.

The results of the empirical part of this work contribute to answering three research questions: (1) What made young members join a party? (2) How do young members experience the party and (3) How do young members envision their future involvement in the party? This last chapter summarises the answers to these three questions and discusses their implications based on the analytical framework of the study.

## 8.1 Summary of Key Findings

This work began with a three-fold research question about young party members' joining of the party, experiences in the party and their future perspectives. The following section



summarises the answers to the three questions based on the results of the empirical analysis and compares the findings with what is already known about party membership in professionalised parties.

The online survey among the young SPD members up to the age of 35 offers insights into this selected group and allows for the comparison of their political attitudes, milieu ties and activities with those of all young people in Germany. The young party members' answers to the survey revealed that they were by no means representative of their age group in the German society. They were highly educated and far more politically active than the average for their age. Although they were open to post-materialist policy issues, the overall impression gleaned from the data is that the traditional working class milieu was still formative for the young party members. Their parents often had been party members as well, and their trade union affiliation was considerably higher than among the young Germans in general. They leaned more to the left of the political spectrum and strongly preferred the policy areas that are the classics of social democracy: social equality and the fight against unemployment. This shows that despite overall developments in society, the importance of the old milieus has not yet vanished among the young party members. The SPD still attracts people who tend to belong to its traditional core group. The data confirms what has previously been said about party members: They are representative not of society but of their party ideology (van Haute and Gauja 2015, 199).

The analysis of young party members' activity patterns indicate that it is too simplistic to analyse the typical young party member. Very distinct patterns of activism became evident among the young people. There was a small group of passive members, constituting about one eighth of the total members, that had not shown up at any party or youth organisation event in the year prior to the survey. A bigger group was highly active and attended party activities several times a month. These activists differed in the type of their activity: Half invested a lot of time in both the party and the youth organisation while the other half was only active in the party organisation, despite being young enough for youth-related activities. This means that the young party members were exposed to the party in different ways. Their experiences with the party should thus differ as well. These findings suggest heterogeneity among the group of young

party members, a concept that was explored further in later chapters of this work. The following section discusses the heterogeneity among the young party members.

### Diverse Patterns of Joining Based on Knowledge and Ideology

The investigation into the mechanisms that made the young members join the party adds to the understanding of the role of both resources and incentives in party membership, as well as how they are connected. The interviews with young party members suggest that joining a party should be understood as a process. The interview sequences provide a rationalised narration of individual ways into the party that reveal how it "happens" that a young person joins a party like the SPD. The young members interviewed sometimes just joined the party on a whim. Others had a profound reason why they joined and why they joined the SPD in particular. In order to understand how this decision is finally made, the whole process between thinking about joining the party and the orienting oneself within the organisation must be taken into consideration.

The pathways into the party are very different, and there is no one "typical way" into the party (Chapter 4). Nevertheless, some patterns of joining are visible in the interview results. One pattern can be called the *first join, then explore* approach: Some members just joined the party because they either wanted to know more about politics or because they were motivated by someone else. They started to develop an idea of what they could do as party members only after they had already become members. Others had a different way into the party that can be described as *first knowing, then joining*. They had a clear idea in mind and made an educated decision about joining the SPD. For example, some members chose the SPD based on previous political experience. The resource of prior knowledge about political activity and processes influenced the motivation of the young members when they joined. This indicates the connection between incentives and resources. Resources are necessary for joining, but resources alone cannot explain why a young person joins the party. Only in connection with incentives is it possible to identify sufficient conditions for joining.

The resources and the incentives that are most relevant for explaining the young party members' decision to join can be identified. The resource of knowledge is essential. All young members in the survey based their decision on some kind of knowledge about the

party and what it may provide them, but the sources of this knowledge differed. Some members gained knowledge about the party from their party-affiliated family, while others received it through school, university courses or in their work setting. Still others based their decision on knowledge and experiences from their former political activism, like in the school student organisation or as student representative on a university board. This suggests that there are multiple sources for this knowledge about the party, indicating that members without one source compensate with another source. But it also shows that resources are needed to overcome the distance to party membership that several interview partners described.

The most relevant incentives for the young members were moral-ideological; almost all the young members in the survey valued the opportunity to somehow be involved in policy changes for the better. Also the activists in the interviews emphasised this motivational factor. This finding is in line with several other findings about party membership motivations (Bruter and Harrison 2009a; Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Spier et al. 2011). The activists were motivated by the prospect of changing the society for better, but the belief that the SPD was ideologically the right place to be politically active was also important for them. This dominance of moral-ideological incentives that became apparent in the interviews with the young activists was also confirmed in the survey data, where this type of incentives was of utmost importance to most of the young members.

The analysis reveals a typology of three latent classes of young party members based on their motivational settings (Chapter 6). One type was highly motivated and considered all three kinds of incentives – moral-ideological, social and professional – as important. This *Take All* type was different from an *Ideologists*. The latter group had no interest in professional incentives that provide an individual benefit from the membership. The distinction between these two types supports the assumption from the interviews that there is a difference between young members who want to pursue a career with the party and young members who do not make such plans. But both types of members were ideologically motivated, with even the potential career seekers being strongly motivated by ideology. Thus, party members likely do not have only *one* dominating or primary motivation (Bruter and Harrison 2009a). Instead, their motivational

setting is rather complex and encompasses different aspects, of which moral-ideological incentives are usually a part. The third type of party members can be deemed the *Reluctants*. This group was relatively small but nonetheless important. The members belonging to this type did not consider any of the incentives as important. At the end of Chapter 6, I hypothesised that they are about to leave the party soon, which was later confirmed in the analysis.

One important explanation for why members belong to a certain motivational type is the duration of membership. The analysis shows that those who had just spent a short time in the party mostly considered all kinds of incentives as important. This encompassing motivational setting waned over the course of time. The "older" members, meaning members with several years of membership, either lost their professional motivations and remained ideologically motivated or abandoned all motivations and joined the group of Reluctants. The cross-sectional nature of the data limits the explanatory power of this aspect, as I was unable to model developments over time, but the strong role of the membership duration highlights the effect that time (or experience) has on incentives. It is further important for the understanding of this phenomenon to determine what influences who ends up as an Ideologist after some time and becomes a Reluctant. Three important aspects made young members remain interested in the moral-ideological incentives that a party can offer: joining at early age, being a union member or having a history of former activism. These aspects all proxy different kinds of socialisation processes that are helpful in maintaining members' motivations over time and providing party members with reasons to stay in the party.

The role of different resources show that there was no direct line between patterns of joining and belonging to a motivational group. Different ways into the party allow members to develop a different motivational setting in the long run. This conclusion must be made with caution. The analysis was not based on longitudinal data but just controlled for the duration of membership. However, the evidence supports that there is a time effect, which becomes clearer when examining the future perspectives of the young party members.

## Experiencing the Party between Career Preparation and Frustration

The experiences of young party activists who had already spent some time with party activities broadened the understanding of how young members can perceive what has been classified in the literature as the professionalisation and centralisation of parties (Chapter 5). In terms of the general image of parties, young members generally had an instrumental perspective on their party. They mostly saw the party as a tool to influence politics and to advance causes that they cared about. They accepted certain shortcomings of the party and frustrating experiences they had as long as they thought they could advance their aims in the party. To what extent they were willing to accept decisions against their beliefs was what distinguished them from each other.

The image of parties as "greying" organisations (D'Antonio and Munimus 2009) was confirmed in the interviews by the experiences of the young party activists. They were very much aware of their position as an exception in an ageing organisation. But their different evaluations of its impact for their participation show that the age composition of a party as such is not sufficient to understand the internal dynamics between young and old members. While some young members perceived older party members as a barrier to their ideas and ambitions, others seemed to profit from their position that provided them with easier access to positions due to the lack of opponents. The experience of young people in old politics depends on the behaviour of the "old" parts and how much their age is an asset or a hindrance to their involvement.

The youth organisation played an important role for the young activists. In the survey, the highly active members were split in half on whether they concentrated their activism only on the party structure or also worked in the youth organisation. However, the interviewees always attributed more relevance to the youth organisation. It was an important space for them in the party but sometimes in different terms. For some members, the youth organisation was the place where they prepared for their future in the party and "learned" to act in the structures, while others saw the youth organisation as a safe space where they were not bound by the requirements of a party that fights for majorities in elections or is part of the government. Both roles were not completely new to the understanding of the role of the youth organisation (Grunden 2006), but

the prevalence of both in *the same* youth organisation suggests that there is a potential source of conflict among the young members.

The young party activists identified with other rank-and-file members of the party and expressed very critical sentiments towards the party leadership. However, their approach shows that they did not see a problem in the structures but rather in the people in charge. They criticised the incumbent party leadership but did not see them as having too much power in the party. At the same time, there were no conflicts between the young members and the professional apparatus of the party. Formal party leadership selection in all German parties has been relatively stable over the decades, but the role of the party headquarters and professional staff has grown steadily (Bukow 2013a; Detterbeck and Rohlfing 2014). Against this background, it could be expected that young party members think that the party headquarters to interfere with inner democratic decision-making. The main concern of the young activists, however, was the individual failures of the party leadership to comply with policy decisions of the party congress and to implement them in government. This was a source of frustration, which added to their feeling that they had little say in the party.

These sentiments correspond to findings about the reorganisation of the British New Labour Party, where researchers identified "clear tendencies towards oligarchy in the party and a trend which allows the views of grass-roots party members to be ignored in policy formation and implementation" (Seyd and Whiteley 2002, 168). But the young activists' criticisms of personal failures rather than structural problems in the SPD mean that they basically accepted the central role of party leadership and are unlikely to challenge the organisational settings or bring back the idea of a more ideological party.

### Party Influence Opportunities Motivate Future Perspectives

The young party members' perspectives on future involvement were analysed in two parts: planning a career by aiming for a party office or a public office or government position and the likelihood of leaving the party (Chapter 7). Both perspectives on the future are explained by drawing on explanations on the society level, the party organisation level and the individual level. The results show that the society-level

explanations, such as ties with the traditional social democratic milieu or the materialist-post-materialist value divide, did not help to explain different future perspectives among the young members. This fits into past research, where former SPD members' reasons for leaving were mainly rooted in policy shifts or the behaviour of the party, while a dissolving working class milieu was not important (Dose, Fischer and Golla 2016). The results of this study confirm that the milieu ties or value settings may influence who joins a party and who does not, but, within the group of party members, it no longer plays a decisive role.

The analysis of the likelihood of leaving the party shows that only a minority of the young members considered leaving the party in the near future. If parties want to keep a substantial membership base, however it is essential to understand what makes those people, who were once convinced to join the party, begin to think about leaving. In the survey, there was one very decisive aspect for leaving: the feeling that the party is less democratic than it should be. This feeling strongly raised the likelihood of leaving. This means that the difference between personal expectations about member involvement in a party and the reality on the ground caused some young people to consider leaving. The analysis of the likelihood of leaving the party also helps to understand better the motivational latent class of *Reluctants*. This type of member was very likely to leave the party in the near future, confirming the assumption that these members lost interest in the incentives that the party may provide. The duration of membership was another indicator for potentially leaving the party. Young members who had just joined intended to stay in the party. The idea of leaving seems to be connected with the experiences that some young members had over the course of their membership.

The analysis about who plans which future career requires distinguishing between *Ideologists with a tentative career perspective* who focused their career plans on the party structures and *ambitious career seekers* who also aimed at reaching public office or a government position. There were important aspects that divided these members: The ideologist, tentative career seekers were more critical of their party, while the ambitious career seekers were more confident with how the party makes decisions. They ambitious career seekers considered themselves to be more effective than other members in influencing the party. They were very likely to resemble parts of the motivational type

of the *Take All* members, thus drawing the shape of these types more clearly. These characteristics suggest that the ambitious career seekers were a distinct group of young members that considered the party as a place that included personal career opportunities for them. They generally had a positive and less critical attitude towards the party organisation.

In the analysis, young members tended towards a step-by-step approach regarding their future plans. Members who were already elected to a party position were much more likely to continue in their party position and seek further public positions. This finding means that such experience enables and supports the transition from tentative to ambitious career seeking. At the same time, the duration of membership did not distinguish between different future perspectives. The young people's duration of party membership in the overall analysis varied by about 20 years, but long-term members did not differ from new members in terms of their career plans. This means that real experience in the party organisation trumps any effect of long-term exposure. The career perspectives of the young members seem to be a matter of assertiveness and belief in personal capacity to influence the party's actions. This relates well to the dominance of influence-related motivations among the young members. The realisation of these incentives, measured as the individuals' perception of opportunities and personal efficacy in influencing the party, explains who seeks a career in the party.

The influence factors for the future perspectives of the young party members can be summarised as follows: Both the likelihood to pursue a career and the likelihood to leave were influenced by factors on the level of the party organisation. The party has the ability to change these aspects. The party can encourage or restrict young members' influence on party decision-making. The more democratic the party is perceived by the young members – meaning the more influence it allows them on decision-making – the higher the number of young members who consider becoming an active member and obtaining positions is and the lower the number of young members who consider leaving the party is. There were members who sought influence and a career in the current state of the party, but the results of the analysis strongly suggest that the number and the heterogeneity of potential future party members increase when the party organisation increases the involvement of its members.



## 8.2 Scope of the Findings

The analysis is based on data from young members in one particular party, the German SPD. The case selection ensures that the results are, in many ways, transferable to other parties because the SPD represents an influential case that is typical for the development of traditional catch-all parties that have professionalised (Chapter 3). Despite these general implications, the case selection naturally limits the scope of the findings in certain aspects. The potential restrictions are that the results are case specific because they are based on empirical data in the German context or that they are case specific because they are based on data from a social democratic party. To what extent are the results "German" results and to what extent are they "social democratic" results?

The transformation of political parties in Germany has some particularities that also influence the results of this analysis. Germany is different from other democracies because its party system has remained relatively stable, and the two "Volksparteien" SPD and CDU remain dominant (Lees 2006; Saalfeld 2002). Despite the steady decline of their hold (Poguntke 2014), there are no governments on the state or national level without one of these two parties in the coalition. The decline of the SPD as the dominant party on the left is slower and weaker than in countries like Spain, Greece or Israel, where the social democratic party has either almost vanished, merged with other centre parties or is just one of several equally strong parties. This means that the demands for change in the SPD are not as strong as they might be in other contexts, and young SPD members can indeed still find a kind of old mass membership-based activism here. But the analysis of the particularities of the German system shows that even in this context, the advancement of a professionalised party is generally backed by its young members.

This analysis also focuses solely on a social democratic party, so it cannot be assumed that the results are valid for all parties. The differences in organisational developments that have occurred across different parties depending on their age and maturity back this assumption (Köln 2016). Newly emerging parties that have no established organisation cannot be expected to show the same dynamics as established parties with a long history and party structures. Older parties usually cannot fully replace their structures

but instead modify them by adding newer forms of participation (Scarrow 2014a). Some examples illustrate this development. Parties like the Pirate Party in Germany developed very different forms of membership participation, often using modern technology (Bieber 2012). However, the presence of these parties in the system has yet to be firmly established and, in the case of the Pirate Party, seems to last only for only a short time. These differences demonstrate the divide between new and old parties, making the results of this study somewhat limited to a certain type of parties. At the same time, the results of this study are by no means only valid for social democratic parties. They can be expected to be valid among different established parties that developed along certain cleavages and milieus into election-focused parties with some professional structure – in other words, parties that already have a relevant organisational structure and membership base. These parties were called professionalised parties in this analysis. They are still important in many of the Western, mostly European, party systems. For these professionalised parties, this analysis provides a suitable example because it is likely that general patterns of young membership should be at least comparable with what can be found in this study.

### 8.3 Implications of the Findings

After discussing both the results of this work and the potential limits of the findings, this concluding chapter end by going to the theoretical framework. How can the results be understood in terms of the three levels of influence this topic, the general society developments, party change and individual reasoning?

The influence of developments on the societal level played an ambiguous role for young party members. Ties with the social democratic political milieu and left-right positioning did not explain differences in future career perspectives and leaving thoughts among the young party members (Chapter 7). Since this analysis did not cover young people who are *not* joining a party, there is no systematic analysis to understand the impact of societal aspects on the decision to join. However, there were some hints that allowed for the assumption that general societal developments influence the decision to join a party. The young party members in this study were distinct from their fellow age

group in that they were more likely to have parents who were party members and that they were more often trade union members (Chapter 3). In the analysis of their ways into the party, members who had a family background in the party and were somehow attached to the old milieu of the social democrats had an easier way into the party. However, such initial support in joining the party could be replaced by educational or the work place settings (Chapter 4). In terms of the relevance of general society developments, this means that milieu ties still matter at the initial point of membership, but there are compensation effects available as well. Developments on the societal level do not matter at all in differentiating between the groups of party members, at least not in terms of the decision about whether to take up a career in the party. They also do not explain who will probably leave the party in the future.

The role played by the party organisation in retaining its young members was less ambiguous. The aspects that related to the level of the party organisation were decisive for the potential future of the young members (Chapter 7). The party generally attracted young people who had different demands for their membership. Influencing the party with the aim to change society for the better was the dominant motivation among the young party members, while individual interests differed (Chapters 4 and 6). The attractiveness of the party, however, depended on the political leverage that it offers. The young members were not very likely to challenge the professionalisation and electoral orientation of the party. It is unlikely that they will bring a "participatory turn" into the mainstream of party change (Chapter 5). It seems as if the young members either accepted the conditions of involvement in the party or they were about to leave the party. Members who were more critical towards the party seemed to be more prone to leave than to work for organisational change. This is similar to what Seyd and Whiteley (2002, 170) described for New Labour: The party becomes a more monolithic body that does not have to fear much opposition from the inside. This is what the authors called the *plebiscitary party model*, or a party with a formal organisation and membership where the leaders concentrate power in their hands and let members regularly endorse their decisions. The results of this study suggest that such a future is also likely for the SPD.

The relevance of the party-level explanations show that parties can indeed influence

how their future membership will look like. The opportunity to influence politics in an organisational setting that allows access to power was the dominant motivation among the young members irrespective of their future perspectives (Chapter 6). Some young activists were willing to accept ideological compromises when it helps to reach out to the electorate. Members who joined such a party were a minority among the younger generation in that they fit the need of the party to act in settings that require compromises, whether for vote maximisation or in a coalition government (Chapter 5). Parties can establish internal structures that offer opportunities for influence for members and strengthen the accountability of the leadership. If parties want to maintain a robust membership, they should establish these structures. They can no longer count on attracting young people and retaining their members due to milieu ties. They must be convincing as an organisation, or as Seyd and Whiteley (2002, 185) put it: "A retention strategy is as important as a recruitment strategy. It is of little use recruiting new members, if they find that there is little effective role in the organisation for them once they have joined." The results of this analysis strongly support their argument.

The aspects on the individual level, or resources and incentives, also proved to be important for the research questions. The incentives were the basis for the typology of young party members (Chapter 6), which again was an important predictor for the future perspectives of the young members (Chapter 7). What became apparent on the individual level was a clearer picture of the motivational settings of young members. There was clear evidence that the vast majority of young members were motivated by moral-ideological incentives, although to different extents. The dividing line between the young members in the party was about how much they considered to be personal benefits important and whether they accepted having to conform with the party. Individual-level factors were influenced both by societal developments and party organisation developments. Resources stemming from family or milieu ties mattered for some young members when they joined the party, but they could be replaced by other resources like education (Chapter 4). On the one hand, developments on the societal level, such as individualisation processes, impacted the relevance of resources for party membership. On the other hand, the party organisation influenced the realisation of incentives of members by providing them with opportunities for influence and giving them

the impression of realising their wish to contribute (Chapters 5 and 7). This means that both resources and incentives are essential in understanding young party membership – in other words, they cannot be understood without the context that influences them.

This study shows that the threefold question of joining, experiencing and planning a future in a traditional, yet professionalised catch-all party can be explained by a complex interplay of factors and developments on the level of the individual, the party and society. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that there is no such thing as a typical young party member. There is also no reason to draw a completely negative picture of the future of these parties based on what is now known about their young members. The dominance of moral-ideological incentives shows that not just selfish careerists are joining the party. This caricature of young party members at a time where there are many other political opportunities must be rejected. Some reasons for concern do remain. Among the young party members, there are "careerists" as well as "believers" (Panebianco 1988, 25). But the "nucleus" of young party members is likely those who are the most assimilated and uncritical, leaving this not very diverse group as the main source of future political leadership.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A

# Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

## A.1 Overview of Interview Partners

| No. | Name      | Gender | Occupation                  | Highest degree             | Age | Duration | Position      |     |     |
|-----|-----------|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----|----------|---------------|-----|-----|
|     |           |        |                             |                            |     |          | Federal state | PO  | YO  |
| I1  | Peter     | m      | working / Ph.D. student     | higher education (MA)      | 30  | 4        | NRW           | yes | no  |
| I2  | Laura     | f      | student                     | high school                | 24  | 3        | Bavaria       | yes | yes |
| I3  | Paul      | m      | working                     | higher education (MA)      | 32  | 3        | Lower Saxony  | no  | yes |
| I4  | Martin    | m      | student                     | high school                | 24  | 5        | NRW           | yes | yes |
| I5  | Simon     | m      | working                     | higher education (MA)      | 27  | 3        | Thuringia     | no  | yes |
| I6  | Sarah     | f      | working                     | vocational training degree | 24  | 7        | Saarland      | no  | yes |
| I7  | Tom       | m      | vocational training student | vocational training degree | 23  | 3        | Saxony Anhalt | no  | yes |
| I8  | Kay       | NA     | student                     | higher education (BA)      | 24  | 9        | Berlin        | no  | yes |
| I9  | Christine | f      | student                     | high school                | 20  | 4        | NRW           | yes | yes |
| I10 | Julia     | f      | working                     | higher education (MA)      | 26  | 1        | RLP           | no  | yes |

**Table A.1: Overview of interview partners** with important characteristics. The average age is 25, the average duration of membership is 4 years. durations=years of membership, position po= obtains an officially elected position in the party organisation (local, regional or state level), position yo = obtains an officially elected position in the youth organisation (local, regional or state level). \*Names are not real names for anonymity.



## A.2 Summaries of the Interview Cases

Each of the interview partners is introduced with information about age and duration of membership, the occupational situation, personal connections to the party, if any, and main reasons that was stated for joining the party. Additional information is given about positions in the party or youth organisation and the general attitude of the interview partner towards the party.

**Peter (I1)** is 30 years old and joined the party four years ago. He is a university graduate and works in the public sector. He comes from a social democratic family. He was a student representative in different university committees, but joined the party only after he graduated. His main motivation was the experience during his student activism. He wanted to continue the activities and searched for a different arena. He leads a local working group in the party organisation and is part of a local leadership board. He has a partly critical attitude towards the party, mainly towards some policies that matter to him. But he is generally loyal to the organisation and sees the variety of opinions as a benefit to attract many voters.

**Laura (I2)** is 24 years old and joined the party three years ago. She is a B.A. student. Her father is an active party member and he took her to party activities where she was motivated to join. She describes her joining as being very passive and a result of others pushing her towards it. She is leading a regional working group in the party organisation and was elected to congress delegations. She is also active in several local groups both in the youth organisation and the party. Her attitude towards the party is positive, despite some minor disagreements on policies. Her main concern is that the national decision making is too far away from local realities.

**Paul (I3)** is 32 years old and joined the party three years ago. He is a M.A. student who is about to graduate. His family has a communist party background which motivated him to prefer the SPD over the left party. He joined the party after several years of activism outside political parties. He is a former left wing activist in different groups and

used to reject representative politics. His motivation to join the party was to influence an important actor in the parliamentary political system. He is elected to a regional leadership board in the youth organisation and participates in regional party leadership boards as a youth delegate. His attitude is very critical of the party, its structures and politics.

**Martin (I4)** is 24 years old and joined the party five years ago. He is a B.A. student. He has former party members in his family. He joined the party as a school student when he learned about the history of parties in school. His motivation was to express his support for the party, then he also got a rewarding feeling of influence. He is elected to regional working groups and to the local leadership board of both the party and the youth organisation. His attitude is split between the youth organisation and the party. He identifies strongly with the youth organisation and its policies while he is critical of the party as an ageing organisation that seeks too much to attract voters.

**Simon (I5)** is 27 years old and joined the party three years ago. He is a university graduate and works in the periphery of the party. He joined the party after an internship during his studies. The personal contacts during this work motivated him to join and continue as an activist. He is elected to the regional leadership board of the youth organisation. He is both emotionally connected with the party and assesses that the efficiency of his activism is important for him and he does not want to focus too much on a certain organisation. He is critical about the structures of the party that advance those that spent most time in meetings over people with good ideas.

**Sarah (I6)** is 24 years old and joined the party seven years ago. She works after graduating from vocational training. One of her parents is a party member, too. She joined the party after an internship in a party office while she was a school student. Her motivation stems from diverse personal contacts with other party members. She holds elected positions both in the youth section and the party organisation on the local level. Her attitude towards the party is positive, but she is critical towards the party leadership which she sees as being arrogant.

**Tom (I7)** is 23 years old and joined the party three years ago. He is a vocational training student who works part-time and studies part-time. He joined the party during an election campaign because he wanted not only to complain about politics but also try to influence what happens. He is part of the regional leadership board in the youth organisation and works on many youth related issues. He is confident with the party but expresses criticism regarding the youth organisation and its ideological fights.

**Kay (I8)** is 24 years old and joined the party nine years ago. S/he is a M.A. student. S/he comes from a family that is close to the party and joined as a school student during a demonstration period. Family and friends were motivating for joining, but the choice for the party was mainly due to the lack of more left wing organisations. S/he is part of the regional leadership of the youth organisation but has no position in the party. S/he is highly critical about the party and its policies, while s/he feels at the right place in the youth organisation.

**Christine (I9)** is 20 years old and joined the party four years ago. She is a B.A. student. Her grandparents were party members. She joined the party after collaborating with the youth organisation on a policy issue when she was a school student representative. She felt that she can influence politics better if she has access to the party structures. She is elected to several working groups and local leadership boards in the youth organisation and the party. Her main focus is the youth organisation. She is critical towards the party, especially towards some other party members and their opinions.

**Julia (I10)** is 26 years old and joined the party a year ago. She graduated from university and works in the public sector. She joined the party as she regularly came in contact with party politics due to her job. Her motivation was to understand how a party functions and to have access to information. She was elected to the local leadership board of the youth organisation but lately her mandate was over and she did not run again for office. Her attitude towards the party is slightly critical as she felt frequent opposition towards her as a new activist. She also felt exposed as a woman without

being able to influence.

### A.3 Interview Guide

The interview guide was used for interviews with young party activists. All interviews were conducted using the German guideline. The English version is used only for documentary purpose.

# 1 LEITFADEN FRAGEBOGEN – DEUTSCH

*Komplettes Gespräch wird auf Tonband aufgenommen, inklusive Intro und Abschluss:*

## 1.1 INTRO

Informationen zum Forschungsprojekt:

Herzlichen Dank, dass du dir die Zeit für das Interview mit mir nimmst. Bevor wir beginnen, möchte ich dir kurz noch einmal erzählen, worum es mir geht: Ich schreibe meine Doktorarbeit über die Beteiligungsmotive und die politischen Aktivitäten von jungen Parteimitgliedern in der SPD und bei den Jusos. Ich interessiere mich besonders dafür, *WIE* du die Partei erlebst und *WAS* du in der Partei machst.

Reicht dir das erst einmal an Informationen dazu oder möchtest du dazu noch mehr wissen?

→ *Wenn der/die Interviewte mehr Informationen wünscht:*

Ich möchte herausfinden, was junge Menschen erleben, die in die SPD/JUSOS eintreten, was ihnen bei ihrer Mitgliedschaft in der Partei wichtig ist und wie sie die Partei erleben. Ich will wissen, wie ihr Alltag in der Partei aussieht. Ist das soweit ok?

Vorgehensweise, Umfang, Verwendung der Daten, Datenschutz:

Gut, dann sage ich dir noch ein paar Dinge zum Ablauf: Wie ich dir schon im Vorfeld geschrieben habe, schätze ich, unser Gespräch wird etwa 45-60 Minuten dauern. Im Verlauf unseres Gesprächs werde ich dir verschiedene Fragen stellen. Ich bitte dich, mir all das zu erzählen, was für dich wichtig ist. Ich werde dich auch nicht unterbrechen. Es gibt dabei kein „richtig“ und kein „falsch“, mich interessiert, was dir wichtig ist. Ich werde dir genügend Zeit lassen. Wir haben quasi „alle Zeit der Welt“.

Noch etwas zu den formellen Angelegenheiten:

Wie ich dir schon geschrieben habe, möchte ich das Interview für die spätere Auswertung auf Band aufnehmen und es anschließend verschriftlichen. Dadurch kann ich dir im Gespräch besser folgen, weil ich nicht alles mitschreiben muss. Ich werde mir zwischendurch eventuell ein paar Notizen machen, damit ich dich nicht unterbrechen muss, wenn du erzählst.

Ich verwende das Interviewmaterial in der Arbeit selbstverständlich anonym und vertraulich. Das heißt: alle persönlichen Daten, die Rückschlüsse auf dich ermöglichen, werden gelöscht oder anonymisiert. Ich versichere dir das auch schriftlich in einer Vertrauenssicherklärung. Außerdem

werden die Daten auch nur dann ausgewertet, wenn du mir dazu nach dem Interview das ok in einer Einverständniserklärung gibst. Ist das soweit in Ordnung für dich?

## 1.2 INTERVIEW

Leitfrage

Gut dann zur ersten Frage: Ich möchte dich bitten, mir von deinem Eintritt in die SPD/bei den Jusos zu erzählen...

*(falls Interviewpartner/in fragt, was er/sie erzählen soll: Einladen, alles zu erzählen, was für ihn/sie wichtig ist. Dies ist der narrative Teil der Interviews)*

Folgefragen

*(zunächst Fragen stellen, die sich aus der vorhergehenden Erzählung ergeben. Neue Themen erst beginnen, wenn Interviewpartner/in sagt, dass alles gesagt ist)*

| Weitere Fragen   | Nachfragen  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Kannst du mir erzählen, was seitdem passiert ist (seit du Parteimitglied geworden bist)?</li><li>■ Was heißt es für dich, SPD (oder Juso-)Mitglied zu sein?</li><li>■ Was ist aus deiner Sicht der Unterschied zwischen der SPD und Jusos?</li><li>■ Gibt es etwas, das dich an der SPD stört? Etwas, worüber du dich beschweren würdest?</li><li>■ Hast du jemals überlegt, wieder aus der SPD auszutreten? Warum?</li><li>■ Gibt es etwas, dass dich immer wieder motiviert, dabei zu bleiben?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Gibt es noch etwas Anderes?</li><li>■ Gibt es noch mehr?</li><li>■ Was noch?</li><li>■ Kannst du mir dazu noch mehr erzählen= <i>Wenn sie sich auf „normal“, „üblich“ etc. beziehen: Was heißt das für dich? Wie muss ich mir das vorstellen?</i></li></ul> |

## 1.3 ABSCHLUSS

Positivfrage:

Nun vielleicht eine etwas ungewöhnliche Frage: Erzähl mir mal von deinem schönsten Erlebnis, dass du bei deinen Aktivitäten in der SPD/bei den Jusos erlebt hast ...

Ausstiegfrage:

Gut, von meiner Seite aus wäre es das gewesen. Gibt es von dir aus noch etwas, dass du noch erzählen möchtest, was dir wichtig ist und was bisher noch nicht angesprochen wurde?

Abschluss:

Dann danke ich dir ganz herzlich für deine Teilnahme am Interview, für deine Zeit und deine Offenheit. Eine Frage habe ich noch: Darf ich mich nochmal bei dir melden, falls im Verlauf meiner Arbeit noch Fragen auftauchen?

## 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE – ENGLISH

*The whole interview will be recorded, including intro and closing!*

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Information on the research project:

First of all, thank you very much for your time. Before we start, I would like to give you some short information on the reason for this interview. I am writing my PhD (dissertation) on the joining motives and the political activities of young party members in the SPD and Jusos. I am especially interested in your *EXPERIENCES* within the SPD and in the Jusos and in *WHAT* your role is as a party member.

Would that be enough information for now or would you like to learn more?

→ *In the latter case, proceed with further information:*

I want to learn what young people experience when they become a member of the SPD/Jusos, like: What is important to them and how they see the party. I want to see how the everyday life of a young party member looks like. Would that be ok so far?

Proceedings, duration of the interview and privacy:

Ok. Now I will tell you some more about the proceedings of the interview. Like I told you before, I think the interview will take around 45 min up to one hour. During our talk, I will ask you a couple of questions. I ask you to tell me everything that *YOU* think is important. I will not interrupt you. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to my questions – I want to hear your perspective. You will have all the time you need; from my side there is no need to finish on time.

One more official thing:

Like I wrote in my email, I will record the interview for my analysis. It will be written down afterwards. This helps me a lot to follow your answers, since I will not need to write while you are speaking.

If I publish any material, I will make anonymous everything you said. There will be no personal data in any publication. I will give you a written declaration on that. For legal reasons, I need your written agreement to these proceedings. I will give you a data privacy statement to sign after the interview. Is that ok for you?

## 1.2 INTERVIEW

Main question

Ok, so then we can start with the first question:

I would like to ask you if you could tell me how it happened that you became a member of the SPD.

*(if the interviewee asks about what to tell: invite him/her to tell everything s/he thinks is important – this part should constitute the main narrative part of the interview)*

Following questions

*(try to ask inherent questions first: questions about aspects that have been mentioned in the first part. Only proceed to the other questions when interviewee told everything that is important for him/her)*

| Further questions  | Keeping up the narration  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Could you tell me what happened since then (since you became a member of the party)?</li><li>▪ What does it mean for you to be a member of the SPD (and/or) the Jusos?</li><li>▪ What is the difference to you between the SPD and the Jusos?</li><li>▪ Do you have any complaints against the SPD?/Something you do not like?</li><li>▪ Have you ever thought of leaving the SPD? Why?</li><li>▪ Is there something that constantly motivates you to stay in the SPD?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is there something else? Is there anything more?</li><li>▪ What else?</li><li>▪ Can you tell me more about that?</li><li>▪ If they refer to "usual", "normal": What does that mean for you? What exactly does that look like?</li></ul> |

## 1.3 CLOSING

Positive question:

Maybe you have never been asked this, but could you tell me about your best experience you had in the SPD or the Jusos?

Closing question:

Ok, I do not have any more questions. Is there something more you want to tell me? Maybe something that is important for you but did not fit into any question or something you expected to be asked here?

Closing:

Ok, so thank you very much for your time and for the insight you gave me. There is one more thing: May I approach you in case of any further questions throughout my work?

## A.4 Overall Coding Frame for Interview Analysis

| <b>Part 1: Joining the party (Chapter 4)</b>     |  |
|--|--|
| Resources  | <p><i>Time</i><br/>How do young party members experience time constraints when they join the party, for example due to their occupation situation or because of family or care duties?</p> <p><i>Money</i><br/>What role does money play for young party members when they reflect about their joining of the party?</p> <p><i>Knowledge</i><br/>What kind of knowledge and skills influence the young members' decision to join the party?</p>  |
| Incentives                                       | <p><i>Moral-ideological Incentives</i><br/>What arguments for their party membership do young members find that are driven by moral or ideological reasons?</p> <p><i>Professional Incentives</i><br/>What individual benefits play a role in motivating young party members to join their party?</p> <p><i>Social Incentives</i><br/>Which social benefits of part membership do the young members view as important?</p>   |
| <b>Part 2: Activism in the party (Chapter 5)</b> |  |
| Party image of young party members               | <p><i>General image of the party</i><br/>Are there indications that the young members are partial to hierarchical organisations?</p> <p><i>Experiences of age in the party</i><br/>Does age play a role for how young members experience the party?</p>  |
| Party change                                     | <p><i>Distinctness of the party</i><br/>How distinguish young members between different parties and how do they see their party in relation to other parties?</p> <p><i>Bureaucratization of the party</i><br/>How do young members perceive restrictions and bureaucratic tasks?</p> <p><i>Electoral orientation of the party</i><br/>How do young members accept the electoral focus of the party?</p> <p><i>Professionalisation of the party</i><br/>How do young members experience leadership hierarchies and influence in the party?</p> |
| Youth organisation                               | <p><i>Outreach to youth and electoral support</i><br/>How do young members experience opportunities to transmit youth interests into the party?</p> <p><i>Educating future party officials</i><br/>How do young members understand the role of the youth organisation in providing the party with future leadership?</p>   |

**Table A.2: Coding frame for interview analysis.** Summary of guiding questions and coding scheme for the qualitative content analysis.



## A.5 Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was used in German. The English version is only for documentary purpose.

## Befragung junger SPD-Mitglieder

Liebe Teilnehmerin, lieber Teilnehmer,  
Herzlich willkommen bei der Befragung junger SPD-Mitglieder. Vielen Dank für deine Bereitschaft, mich bei meinem Forschungsprojekt zu unterstützen.

Mit dieser Befragung möchte ich mehr über die Sichtweisen junger Parteimitglieder erfahren und wissen, was sie mit der SPD verbindet. Die Umfrage findet im Rahmen einer wissenschaftlichen Studie an der [Universität Duisburg-Essen](#) statt.

Du kannst an dieser Befragung teilnehmen, wenn du

- Mitglied der SPD oder der Juso bist *und*
- maximal 35 Jahre alt bist.

Die Beantwortung des Fragebogens dauert ca. 15 Minuten. Dies ist allerdings ein Durchschnittswert, die Befragung kann bei dir auch etwas kürzer oder länger dauern. Deinen aktuellen Fortschritt im Fragebogen kannst du jederzeit am unteren Ende des Bildschirms sehen.

Die Daten werden *anonymisiert* ausgewertet. Es werden keine persönlichen Daten gespeichert. Zum Abschluss des Fragebogens kannst du eine E-Mail-Adresse hinterlassen, um Ergebnisse der Studie zu erhalten.

Viel Spaß bei der Beantwortung und noch einmal herzlichen Dank für deine Unterstützung!

Regina Weber

### Kontakt

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[@weberregina, www.regina.weber.de](http://www.regina.weber.de)

## Fragen zu deiner Person

Zu Beginn möchte ich dir einige Fragen zu deiner Person, zu deiner Wohnsituation sowie zu Religion, Bildung und Beruf stellen.

### Persönliche Daten

Geburtsmonat  [Monat]  [Jahr]

Postleitzahl deines Wohnortes: (bei mehreren Wohnorten bitte den Ort angeben, an dem du in der SPD bzw. bei den Jusos aktiv bist)

Geschlecht  [Bitte auswählen]   
Staatsangehörigkeit  [Bitte auswählen]

## Wohnen und Alltag

Was tritt am ehesten auf deine aktuelle Wohnsituation zu?

Ich wohne...

- ☐ zusammen mit Partner/in
- ☐ zusammen mit Partner/in und Kind(ern)
- ☐ allein mit Kind(ern)
- ☐ bei meinen Eltern bzw. Verwandten
- ☐ bei meinen Eltern bzw. Verwandten mit Kind(ern)
- ☐ in einer Wohngemeinschaft
- ☐ allein

Welche Sprache sprichst du am häufigsten zu Hause?

- ☐ Deutsch
- ☐  Eine andere und zwar:

## Religion

Ganz allgemein gesprochen, als wie religiös würdest du dich bezeichnen?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0  
überhaupt nicht religiös ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ sehr religiös

Unabhängig davon, ob du Mitglied oder Angehöriger einer Kirche oder Religionsgemeinschaft bist, fühlst du dich einer bestimmten Religion oder Konfession zugehörig?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß nicht

### PHP-Code

```
if (value('SD09') == 1) {  
    question('SD10');  
}
```

question('SD10')

### Religion

Du hast angegeben, dass du dich einer Religion zugehörig fühlst. Welche Religion ist das?

- ☐ Jüdisch  
☐ Muslimisch  
☐ Christlich  
☐ Eine andere

## Schule, Studium und Ausbildung

Was ist dein höchster allgemeinbildender Schulabschluss?

- ☐ Keiner  
☐ Hauptschulabschluss  
☐ Realschulabschluss oder Mittlerer Schulabschluss  
☐ Fachhochschulreife oder Abitur  
☐  Ein anderer und zwar:

Was ist dein höchster Ausbildungs- oder Studienabschluss?

- ☐ Keiner  
☐ Berufliche Ausbildung  
☐ Meister- oder Technikerabschluss  
☐ Bachelor  
☐ Master oder Magister oder Diplom oder Staatsexamen  
☐ Promotion  
☐  Ein anderer und zwar:

Wie viele Jahre hast du insgesamt eine Schule besucht, inklusive den Besuch einer Berufsschule oder Hochschule?

Runde bitte auf ganze Jahre auf:  Jahre

## Beruf

Weicher Status trät in den vergangenen 7 Tagen auf dich zu? (Mehrfachnennung möglich)

- ☐ Schüler/in  
☐ Student/in  
☐ Promovierende/r  
☐ In beruflicher Ausbildung  
☐ Berufstätig in Vollzeit  
☐ Berufstätig in Teilzeit  
☐ Freigesellt von beruflicher Tätigkeit (Elternzeit, Pflege von Angehörigen)  
☐ Arbeitslos oder arbeitssuchend  
☐ Berufsunfähig

Was davon trät in den letzten 7 Tagen am besten auf dich zu?

(Bitte auswählen)

## PHP-Code

```
if ( (value('SD16') > 2) and (value('SD16') < 6) ) {
    question('SD17');
    question('SD18');
}
```

question(SD17)

## Berufliche Tätigkeit

Zu welcher Berufsgruppe gehörst du?

- ☐ Selbständige oder Freiberufler/innen  
☐ Leitende Angestellte (inkl. Angestellte im höherem Dienst)  
☐ Beamte im höherem Dienst  
☐ Facharbeiter/innen, Techniker/innen oder Meister/innen  
☐ Sonstige Angestellte  
☐ Sonstige Beamte  
☐ Sonstige Arbeiter/innen  
☐ Sonstiges

question(SD18)

In welchem Bereich bist du tätig?

- ☐ In der Regierung oder öffentlichen Verwaltung  
☐ Im Bereich Hochschulen/Wissenschaft  
☐ Im Dienstleistungssektor (z.B. Handel, Verkehr, Banken, Versicherungen, Gastgewerbe, freie Berufe)  
☐ In der Industrie (produzierendes Gewerbe)  
☐ In der Land- und Forstwirtschaft

## Gewerkschaftsmitgliedschaft

Bist du gegenwärtig oder warst du früher Mitglied einer Gewerkschaft oder einer ähnlichen Organisation?

- ☐ Ja, gegenwärtig  
☐ Ja, früher  
☐ Nein  
☐ Weiß nicht

## Bevölkerungsschicht

Es wird manchmal über verschiedene Bevölkerungsschichten gesprochen.

Was denkst du, welcher Bevölkerungsschicht gehören deine Eltern während deiner Kindheit an?

- ☐ Unterschicht
- ☐ Untere Mittelschicht
- ☐ Mittlere Mittelschicht
- ☐ Obere Mittelschicht
- ☐ Oberschicht
- ☐ Keiner dieser Schichten

Und welcher Bevölkerungsschicht fühlst du dich heute zugehörig?

- ☐ Unterschicht
- ☐ Untere Mittelschicht
- ☐ Mittlere Mittelschicht
- ☐ Obere Mittelschicht
- ☐ Oberschicht
- ☐ Keiner dieser Schichten

## Fragen zu deinen politischen Meinungen und Aktivitäten

Auf den folgenden Seiten möchte ich dir einige Fragen zu deinen politischen Einstellungen und deinen Aktivitäten stellen.

## Politisches Interesse und Prioritäten

Ganz generell gesprochen, wie sehr bist du an Politik interessiert?

|  |                           |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |   |                       |    |                       |                   |
|--|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|-------------------|
|  | gar nicht<br>interessiert | 0 | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 | <input type="radio"/> | 8 | <input type="radio"/> | 9 | <input type="radio"/> | 10 | <input type="radio"/> | sehr interessiert |
|--|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|-------------------|

In der Politik geht es häufig darum, Prioritäten zu setzen. Wie wichtig sind aus deiner Sicht die folgenden Themen als öffentliche Aufgabe?

|   | sehr wichtig          | wichtig               | unwichtig             | sehr unwichtig        | weiß nicht            |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Arbeitslosigkeit bekämpfen                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Steuern und Abgaben senken                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Umweltschutz                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Die soziale Integration Europas befördern | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Verbrechen bekämpfen                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Soziale Ungleichheit reduzieren           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Rassistische Ungleichheit reduzieren      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Geschlechtergerechtigkeit fördern         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Wenn du diese Themen nach ihrer Wichtigkeit ordnen müsstest, welche Reihenfolge würdest du wählen?

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arbeitslosigkeit bekämpfen              | Steuern und Abgaben senken                |
| 2 | Umweltschutz                            | Die soziale Integration Europas befördern |
| 3 |   |   |
| 4 | Verbrechen bekämpfen                    | Soziale Ungleichheit reduzieren           |
| 5 | Rassistische Diskriminierung reduzieren | Geschlechtergerechtigkeit fördern         |
| 6 |   |   |
| 7 |   |   |
| 8 |   |   |

Wenn du nun ganz allgemein das aus deiner Sicht wichtigste politische Thema benennen müsstest, was wäre das?

## Einstellungen zu Politik und Parteien

Viele Sozialleistungen werden aus Steuergeldern finanziert. Wenn sich der Staat zwischen zwei Alternativen entscheiden müsste, was sollte er wählen?

Der Staat sollte

☐ Der Staat sollte die Steuern senken und weniger für Sozialleistungen ausgeben.

☐ 0

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

☐ 6

☐ 7

☐ 8

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ Der Staat sollte die Steuern erhöhen und mehr für Sozialleistungen ausgeben.

In der Politik spricht man manchmal von „links“ und „rechts“. Wo auf der Skala würdest du dich selbst einstufen?

[illegible]



☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## Parteiaustritt

Es kommt immer wieder vor, dass Mitglieder aus Parteien austreten. Schließt du für dich einen solchen Austritt aus der SPD prinzipiell aus?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß nicht

## PHP-Code

```
if (value('PR05') == 2) {
    question('PR06');
    question('PR07');
}
```

## question('PR06')

Hast du schon einmal darüber nachgedacht, aus der SPD auszutreten?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß nicht

## question('PR07')

*Wenn ja: Gab oder gibt es einen konkreten Anlass, der dich zum Nachdenken über einen Austritt angeregt hat?*

- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Ja und zwar
- ☐ Weiß nicht

## Wahlen

Hast du bei einer Wahl zum Landtag, Bundestag oder Europaparlament schon einmal eine andere Partei als die SPD gewählt bzw. eine andere Kandidat:in:innen anderen Kandidaten als von der SPD?

- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Ja, eine bestimmte Partei:
- ☐ Ja, verschiedene Parteien

- ☐ Weiß nicht

Hast du bei einer Kommunalwahl schon einmal eine andere Partei als die SPD bzw. eine andere Kandidatin/einen anderen Kandidaten als von der SPD gewählt?

- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Ja, eine bestimmte Partei:
- ☐ Ja, verschiedene Parteien
- ☐ Weiß nicht

## Parteilfinanzierung

Wie viel Geld (Mitgliedsbeitrag und freiwillige Spenden) hast du in den vergangenen 12 Monaten an die SPD bezahlt? Wenn du es nicht genau weißt, schätze bitte. Gib den Betrag bitte in ganzen Zahlen an.

EUR

Was denkst du, wie wichtig sind derzeit die einzelnen Geldquellen für die Finanzierung der Arbeit der SPD?

|   | sehr unwichtig        | unwichtig             | wichtig               | sehr wichtig          | weiß nicht            |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mitgliedsbeiträge                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Staatliche Finanzierung aus Steuergeldern | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Freiwillige Spenden von Privatpersonen    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Freiwillige Spenden von Unternehmen       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Unternehmerische Tätigkeiten der SPD      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## Fragen zu deinem Beitritt zur SPD

Ich möchte dir einige Fragen zu deinem Beitritt zur SPD stellen. Erinnere dich bitte einmal an die Zeit vor deinem Beitritt.

## Andere Parteien

Warst du vor deinem Beitritt schon einmal Mitglied einer anderen Partei oder der Jugendorganisation einer anderen Partei?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

Wenn ja: Welche Partei war das?

- ☐ CDU oder CSU
- ☐ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

- ☐ Die Linke/PDS/MASG  
☐ F.D.P.  
☐ Piratenpartei  
☐ Eine andere, und zwar:

## Andere Gruppen und Organisationen

Warst du vor deinem Beitritt zur SPD bzw. zu den Jusos bereits aktiv in einer anderen politischen Gruppe oder Organisation?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß nicht

Wenn ja: Welche Art von Gruppe/n oder Organisation/en war das? (Mehrfachauswahl möglich).

- ☐ Schüler- oder Studierendenvertretung
- ☐ Gewerkschaft oder Berufsverband
- ☐ Religiöse Gruppe
- ☐ Lokale Initiative
- ☐ Nichtregierungsorganisation
- ☐ Eine andere und zwar:

## Beitritt zur SPD

Hattest du vor deinem Beitritt persönliche Kontakte zu Mitgliedern der SPD?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß nicht

Wie hat dein erster Kontakt mit der SPD stattgefunden?

- ☐ Ich bin auf die SPD zugegangen
- ☐ Ein mir persönlich bekanntes Mitglied hat mich angesprochen
- ☐ Ein mir zuvor persönlich nicht bekanntes Mitglied hat mich angesprochen
- ☐ Weiß nicht

## Beitrittsgründe

Warum bist du der SPD beigetreten? Bitte gib an, wie wichtig die folgenden Gründe für dich bei deinem Beitritt waren:

- Um meiner Verantwortung als Bürger/in nachzukommen
- ☐ sehr unwichtig    ☐ unwichtig    ☒ wichtig    ☐ sehr wichtig    ☐ weiß nicht

- |  |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Um den politischen Kurs der Partei zu beeinflussen             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um interessante Persönlichkeiten zu treffen                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weil mich ein Mitglied der SPD ohne Spitzenamt beeindruckt hat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Wegen des Einflusses von Familie oder Freunden                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um etwas in der Gesellschaft zu verändern                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um mich besser über Politik informieren zu können              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weil ich mich mit den Grundwerten der Partei identifiziere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aus Spaß an der politischen Arbeit                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aus Interesse an einem Parteiamt oder Mandat                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um eine Person bei Wahlen zu unterstützen                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um mich für die Ziele der Partei einzusetzen                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um persönliche oder berufliche Vorteile zu erlangen            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um gleichgesinnte Leute zu treffen                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um etwas Sinnvolles zu tun                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weil mich eine Spitzenpolitiker/in der SPD beeindruckt hat     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um Netzwerke und Kontakt knüpfen zu können                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Wenn du dich an deinen Beitritt zurück erinnerst: Gab es damals einen besonderen Anlass, der dich zu diesem Schritt bewogen hat?

- ☐ Ja und zwar:
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß nicht

## Fragen zu deinen Aktivitäten

Im Folgenden möchte ich dir nun einige Fragen zu deinen Aktivitäten innerhalb der SPD und der Jusos und zu politischen Aktivitäten darüber hinaus stellen.

## Zeitaufwand für Parteiaktivitäten

Wie häufig hast du in den vergangenen 12 Monaten Zeit für die Mitarbeit in der SPD und beiden Jusos aufgewendet?

- |               | 1x jährlich | 1x halbjährlich | 1x im Quartal | Mehrmals monatlich | weiblich |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|----------|
| In der SPD    | ○           | ○               | ○             | ○                  | ○        |
| Bei den Jusos | ○           | ○               | ○             | ○                  | ○        |

Wie oft hast du in den vergangenen 12 Monaten die folgenden Aktivitäten im Rahmen der SPD oder den Jusos ausgeübt?

|   | nie                   | 1x jährlich           | 1x halbjährlich       | 1x im Quartal         | Monatlich             | Mehrmals im Monat     | weiß nicht            |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Plakate geklebt, Flugblätter verteilt                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Die Partei oder eine Person im Wahlkampf unterstützt                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Freunde und Familie davon zu überzeugen versucht, die SPD zu unterstützen | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| An parteiinternen Debatten teilgenommen                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| An der Formulierung politischer Aussagen mitgearbeitet                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Die Partei bei öffentlichen Veranstaltungen vertreten                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Für ein Amt kandidiert  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| An Festen oder geselligen Veranstaltungen teilgenommen                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Demonstriert  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Die Aktionen anderer Parteien bekämpft                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Deine Ämter

Bist du in der SPD oder bei den Jusos derzeit oder warst du in der Vergangenheit in ein Amt (z.B. als Delegierter oder Vorstandsmitglied) gewählt?

|               | Ja, in der<br>Ja, derzeit<br>Vergangenheit |                       | Nein                  | weiß nicht            |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| In der SPD    | <input type="radio"/>                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| bei den Jusos | <input type="radio"/>                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Falls du schon einmal ein Amt innehabtest: Auf welcher Ebene war das höchste Amt, das du jemals inne hattest angesiedelt?

|               | Auf Ebene<br>des Bundeslandes |                       | Auf<br>Bundesebene    | ich hatte noch<br>nie ein Amt |
|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| In der SPD    | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>         |
| bei den Jusos | <input type="radio"/>         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>         |

Wie würdest du deine derzeitige Parteitaktivität insgesamt einschätzen?

|               | sehr inaktiv          | inaktiv               | aktiv                 | sehr aktiv            | weiß nicht            |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| In der SPD    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bei den Jusos | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Andere Gruppen und Organisationen

Bist du derzeit aktiv in anderen politischen Gruppen oder Organisationen?

☐ Ja  
☐ Nein  
☐ Weiß nicht

Wenn ja: Welche Art von Gruppe/n oder Organisation/en ist das? (Mehrfachauswahl möglich)

☐ Schüler- oder Studierendenvertretung  
☐ Gewerkschaft oder Berufsverband  
☐ Religiöse Gruppe  
☐ Lokale Initiative  
☐ Nichtregierungsorganisation  
☐ Eine andere und zwar:

Fragen zur deiner Perspektive auf die SPD

Zum Abschluss möchte ich dir noch ein paar Fragen zu deiner jetzigen Perspektive und deiner Zukunftssicht auf die SPD fragen.

Einflussmöglichkeiten in der SPD

Es wird viel darüber diskutiert, welchen Einfluss Parteimitglieder in ihrer Partei haben. Wie viel Einfluss denkst du, haben die SPD-Mitglieder im Allgemeinen tatsächlich auf die ...

|   | sehr wenig<br>Einfluss | wenig Einfluss        | viel<br>Einfluss      | sehr viel<br>Einfluss | weiß nicht            |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ... politischen Inhalte der SPD                           | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... Nominierung der Kandidat/innen der SPD zu Wahlen      | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... Zusammensetzung der Parteiführung                     | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... Entscheidung, in eine Regierungskoalition einzutreten | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Und wie viel Einfluss denkst du, hast du persönlich auf die ...

|   | sehr wenig<br>Einfluss | wenig Einfluss        | viel<br>Einfluss      | sehr viel<br>Einfluss | weiß nicht            |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ... politischen Inhalte der SPD                           | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... Nominierung der Kandidat/innen der SPD zu Wahlen      | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... Zusammensetzung der Parteiführung                     | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... Entscheidung, in eine Regierungskoalition einzutreten | <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



Spannungsfeld Mitgliederbeteiligung

In demokratischen Parteien gibt es oft ein Spannungsfeld zwischen dem Wunsch der Mitglieder, Entscheidungen beeinflussen zu können und der Möglichkeit der gewählten Parteiführung, schnell auf politische Ereignisse reagieren zu können.

Wenn du dich ganz allgemein zwischen diesen beiden Punkten entscheiden müsstest, wie was würdest du dir wünschen?

| Mitglieder sollen immer in Entscheidungen einbezogen werden. |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       | Die Parteiführung soll schnell entscheiden. |                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 0  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     | 6                     | 7                     | 8                     | 9                     | 10  | weiß nicht            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="radio"/>  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                       | <input type="radio"/> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Und wie beurteilst du diese Frage hinsichtlich der tatsächlichen Situation in der SPD zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt?

| Die Parteiführung entscheidet schnell. |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       | Die Mitglieder werden immer in Entscheidungen einbezogen. |                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 10                                     | 9                     | 8                     | 7                     | 6                     | 5                     | 4                     | 3                     | 2                     | 1                     | 0   | weiß nicht            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="radio"/>                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>                                     | <input type="radio"/> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Politische Themen

Du hast eben schon eine Frage zu deinen politischen Prioritäten beantwortet. Denk nun einmal an die SPD insgesamt. Als wie wichtig gelten dort die folgenden Themen aus deiner Sicht zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt?

|  | sehr unwichtig        | unwichtig             | wichtig               | sehr wichtig          | weiß nicht            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Arbeitslosigkeit bekämpfen                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Steuern und Abgaben senken                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Umweltschutz   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sich um Frieden im israelisch-palästinensischen Konflikt bemühen | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Verbrechen bekämpfen   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Soziale Ungleichheit reduzieren                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Rassistische Diskriminierung reduzieren                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Geschlechtergerechtigkeit fördern                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Gründe für die Mitgliedschaft in der SPD

Die Gründe, Mitglied einer Partei zu sein, können sich im Laufe der Mitgliedschaft verändern. Bitte gib an, wie wichtig die folgenden Gründe, Mitglied in der SPD zu sein, für dich derzeit sind:

|  | sehr unwichtig        | unwichtig             | wichtig               | sehr wichtig          | weiß nicht            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Um den politischen Kurs der Partei zu beeinflussen | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

|  |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Um meiner Verantwortung als Bürger/in nachzukommen             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um persönliche oder berufliche Vorteile zu erlangen            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weil mich ein Mitglied der SPD ohne Spitzenamt beeindruckt hat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Wegen des Einflusses von Familie oder Freunden                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um Netzwerke und Kontakt knüpfen zu können                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um eine Person bei Wahlen zu unterstützen                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um mich für die Ziele der Partei einzusetzen                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aus Interesse an einem Parteiant oder Mandat                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um gleichgesinnte Leute zu treffen                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weil mich ein/e Spitzenpolitiker/in der SPD beeindruckt hat    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Weil ich mich mit den Grundwerten der Partei identifiziere     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um etwas in der Gesellschaft zu verändern                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um interessante Persönlichkeiten zu treffen                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aus Gewohnheit   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um mich besser über Politik informieren zu können              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aus Spaß an der politische Arbeit                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Um etwas Sinnvolles zu tun                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Zukunftsüberlegungen

Denke nun zum Abschluss einmal zehn Jahre in die Zukunft. Wie wahrscheinlich wird es sein dass du bis dahin...

|  | sehr unwahrscheinlich | unwahrscheinlich      | wahrscheinlich        | sehr wahrscheinlich   | weiß nicht            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ... ein Amt in der SPD oder ein Mandat für die SPD innehaben?              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... eine Position in der Regierung oder öffentlichen Verwaltung innehaben? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... aus der SPD ausgetreten bist?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... eine andere Partei oder Organisation unterstützt?                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Herzlichen Dank!

Die Umfrage ist beendet. Herzlichen Dank für deine Unterstützung!

Verlosung

Unter allen Teilnehmer/innen der Umfrage werden **fünf Online-Einkaufsgutscheine im Wert von jeweils 20 EUR** verlost. Die Teilnahme an der Verlosung ist natürlich freiwillig. Zur Teilnahme brauche ich von dir eine gültige E-mailadresse, unter der ich dich erreichen kann, falls du gewinnst.

Die E-mailadresse wird von deinen anderen Antworten getrennt, damit deine Anonymität gewährleistet ist. Die E-mailadressen werden nur zum Zweck der Verlosung bzw. zu Information über die Ergebnisse der Studie verwendet und nach Abschluss gelöscht.

- ☐ Ich will **an der Verlosung** teilnehmen. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass meine E-Mail-Adresse bis zur Zeichnung der Gewinner/innen gespeichert wird. Meine Angaben in dieser Befragung bleiben weiterhin anonym, meine E-Mail-Adresse wird nicht an Dritte weitergegeben.
- ☐ Ich interessiere mich für die **Ergebnisse dieser Studie** und hätte gerne eine Zusammenfassung per E-Mail.

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**Letzte Seite**

### Herzlich Dank für die Beantwortung des Fragebogens!

Deine Teilnahme hat mir bei meiner Arbeit sehr geholfen. Wenn du noch Fragen oder Anmerkungen hast kannst du mich über folgende Wege erreichen:

#### Kontakt

Regina Weber  
Lehrstuhl für Empirische Politikwissenschaft  
Universität Duisburg-Essen  
Lotharstr. 65, 47057 Duisburg  
Email: [regina.weber@uni-due.de](mailto:regina.weber@uni-due.de)  
Twitter: [@weberregina](https://twitter.com/weberregina)  
Web: [www.reginaweber.de](http://www.reginaweber.de)

#### Befragung junger Parteimitglieder

Regina Weber, M.A.  
Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Universität Duisburg-Essen.

## Questionnaire for young members of the SPD

Dear participant,

thank you very much for supporting me with the research project on young party members.

This questionnaire is part of a research project at the [University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany](#). The aim of the project is to gain knowledge about what drives young people to join the SPD and their experiences with the party.

You can take part in the project if you are

- A member of the SPD or the Jusos and
- not older than 35 years.

It takes about 15 min to answer the questionnaire. This is a mean value, please note that it might take a bit less or more time for you. Your current progress is visible at the bottom of the site.

The data will be analyzed anonymously and no private information is needed. At the end of the questionnaire you can subscribe with an email address to receive results of the study via email.

Thanks again for your support and enjoy the questionnaire!

Regina Weber

### Contact

Institute of Political Science  
University of Duisburg-Essen  
Lotharstr. 65, 47057 Duisburg, Germany  
regina.weber@uni-due.de  
@weberregina, [www.reginae.weber.de](http://www.reginae.weber.de)

## Questions regarding yourself

First, I would like to ask you some questions regarding yourself, your living situation as well as regarding religion, education and your occupation.

### Persönliche Daten

Year and month of birth [Month] [Year]

Postal code of your current place of residence: (If you live in more than one places please use the place where you are registered in the SPD.)

Sex [Please choose]

Citizenship [Please choose]

## Everyday life

What describes best your living situation?

I live ...

- ☐ with my partner
- ☐ with my partner and child(ren)
- ☐ alone with child(ren)
- ☐ with my parents or relatives
- ☐ with my parents or relatives and child(ren)
- ☐ in a shared flat
- ☐ alone

Which language do you primarily speak at home?

- ☐ German
- ☐ another:

## Religion

Generally speaking, how religious would you say you are?

not religious at all 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 very religious

Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

### PHP-Code

```
if (value('SD09') == 1) {
    question('SD10');
}
```

question(SD10)

## Religion

You said you consider yourself as belonging to a religion. Which one?

- ☐ Jewish

- ☐ Muslim  
☐ Christian  
☐ Another

## Education and training

What is the highest level of school education you have successfully completed?

- ☐ None  
☐ Basic education (Hauptschule)  
☐ Middle School (Realschule)  
☐ High school diploma (Fachabitur/Abitur)  
☐ another:

What is the highest level of further or professional education you have successfully completed?

- ☐ None  
☐ Basic professional training  
☐ Further professional training  
☐ Bachelor degree  
☐ Master level degree  
☐ PhD degree  
☐ another:

About how many years of education have you completed, whether full-time or part-time?

Please round up to full years:  Years

## Occupation

Which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days? Select all that apply.

- ☐ School student  
☐ Higher education (B. A. or M.A.) student  
☐ PhD student  
☐ Vocational training  
☐ In paid work (full-time)  
☐ In paid work (part-time)  
☐ Doing housework, looking after children or other persons  
☐ Unemployed  
☐ Permanently disabled to work

And which of these descriptions best describes your situation in the last seven days? Please select only one.

[Please choose]

### PHP-Code

```
if ( (value('SD16') > 2) and (value('SD16') < 6) ) {  
    question('SD17');  
    question('SD18');  
}
```

question(SD17)

### Professional activity

What is your occupational status?

- ☐ Self-employed or Freelancer  
☐ Executive employee  
☐ Executive civil servant  
☐ Trained worker or manufacturer  
☐ Other employee  
☐ Other civil servant  
☐ Other worker  
☐ Other

question(SD18)

In which sector are you working?

- ☐ In government or public administration  
☐ In higher education/academia  
☐ In the service sector  
☐ In the industry  
☐ In agriculture

### Trade union membership

Are you currently or have you previously been a member of a trade union or similar organization?

- ☐ Yes, currently  
☐ Yes, previously  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

### Class

Sometimes we talk about social class in society.

What do you think, which class did your parents belong to when you were a child?

- ☐ Working class
- ☐ Lower middle class
- ☐ Middle class
- ☐ Upper middle class
- ☐ Upper class
- ☐ None of these classes

And which do you feel belonging to?

- ☐ Working class
- ☐ Lower middle class
- ☐ Middle class
- ☐ Upper middle class
- ☐ Upper class
- ☐ None of these classes

### Questions regarding your political opinions and activities

Now I would like to ask you some questions regarding your political opinions and activities.

## Political interests and priorities

Generally speaking, how interested would you say you are in politics?

| very interested | 10                    | 9                     | 8                     | 7                     | 6                     | 5                     | 4                     | 3                     | 2                     | 1                     | 0                     | not interested at all | don't know            |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |                       | <input type="radio"/> |

Politics is often about setting priorities. What do you think, how important are the following issues as a public responsibility?

|                                     | very important        | important             | not important         | not important at all  | don't know            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Fight unemployment                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lower taxes and charges             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Protect the environment             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Strengthen the European integration | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fight crime                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reduce social inequalities          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reduce racial inequalities          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Foster gender equality              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

If you had to arrange these issues according to their importance, what ranking would you choose?

|   |                            |                                     |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Fight unemployment         | Lower taxes and charges             |
| 2 | Protect the environment    | Strengthen the European integration |
| 3 |                            |                                     |
| 4 | Fight crime                | Reduce social inequalities          |
| 5 | Reduce racial inequalities | Foster gender equality              |
| 6 |                            |                                     |
| 7 |                            |                                     |
| 8 |                            |                                     |

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## Attitudes towards politics and parties

Many social benefits and public services are paid for by taxes. In a choice between on the one hand increasing taxes in order to expand benefits and services, and on the other hand reducing taxes and spending less on benefits and services, what should in your opinion be prioritized?

**The state should**

Reduce taxes and spend less on social benefits and services.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

don't know

In politics people sometimes talk of "left" and "right". Where would you place yourself on a scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?

right

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

left

don't know

People have different opinions about political parties. How much do you agree with the following statements about political parties in general?

|  | strongly agree        | agree                 | disagree              | strongly disagree     | don't know            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Work in a political party is very bureaucratic and requires a lot of administrative tasks. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



Have you ever considered to withdraw your membership in the SPD?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

question(PRO7)

If yes: Was there a special occasion for it?

- ☐ No  
☐ Yes, and that is:   
☐ Don't know

Elections

Did you ever vote for a party or a candidate different from the SPD in any election to the Bundestag, Landtag or European parliament?

- ☐ No  
☐ Yes, a particular party:   
☐ Yes, different parties.  
☐ Don't know

Did you ever vote for a party or a candidate different from the SPD in any local elections?

- ☐ No  
☐ Yes, a particular party:   
☐ Yes, different parties.  
☐ Don't know

Financing of political parties

How much money (membership fees and voluntary donations) did you pay to the SPD in the past 12 months? If you do not know the exact amount, please estimate. Please insert a whole number.

NIS

What do you think, how important are the following sources for financing the SPD activities?

|                             |                         |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                             | not at all<br>important | not important         | important             | very important        | don't know            |
| membership fees             | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| public financing from taxes | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Donations from individual supporters

Donations from companies

For-profit activities of the SPD

|                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

Questions regarding your joining of the SPD

I would like to ask you some questions regarding your joining of the SPD. Please remember the time before you were a member of the party.

Other Parties

Have you ever been a member of a different party before joining the SPD?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

If yes: Which party was that?

- ☐ CDU or CSU  
☐ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen  
☐ Die Linke/PDS/WASG/  
☐ F.D.P.  
☐ Piratenpartei  
☐ another:

Other groups and organizations

Before joining the SPD: Have you been an activist of another political group or organization?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

If yes: Which type of group or organization was that?

- ☐ (School) student union  
☐ Trade union or professional organization  
☐ Religious group  
☐ Local initiative  
☐ Non governmental organization  
☐ Another:

Joining the SPD

Did you have personal contact to members of the SPD before you joined the party?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

How did your first contact with the SPD happen?

- ☐ I approached the SPD  
☐ I was approached by a party member that I knew before  
☐ I was approached by a party member that I did not know before  
☐ Don't know

### Reasons for joining

Why did you join the SPD? Please indicate how important the following reasons were when you joined the SPD:

|  | not important         |                       |                       |                       | not important         |                       |                       |                       | important             |                       |                       |                       | very important        |                       |                       |                       | don't know            |                       |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | at all                |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| To meet interesting people                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To change something in society                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because I enjoy political activities                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To act as a responsible citizen                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because I am interested in a party office or a mandate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To influence the politics of the party                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To be able to get better information about politics    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To meet like minded others                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Due to influence of family or friends                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because I identify with the values of the party        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because a rank and file party member impressed me      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To support the goals of the party                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because a party leader impressed me                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To gain personal or professional benefits              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To have networks and contacts                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To support a specific person in elections              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To do something meaningful                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Think back to the times when you joined the SPD. Was there a special occasion that made you join the party?

Yes, and that is:

- ☐ No  
☐ Don't know

### Questions regarding your activities

Now I would like to ask you some questions regarding your activities related to the SPD as well as regarding further political activities.

#### Time spent of party activities

How often did you spend time in the past 12 months on activities with the SPD and Jusos?

|              | never                 | once a year           | once in 6 months      | once in 3 months      | monthly               | several times a month | don't know            |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| with the SPD | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| with Jusos   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How often did you participate in the following activities within the SPD and Jusos during the past 12 months?

|  | never                 | once a year           | once in 6 months      | once in 3 months      | monthly               | several times a month | don't know            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Putting posters, handing out Flyers                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Supporting the party or a single candidate during election campaigns | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trying to convince friends and family to support the SPD             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in internal debates                                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in formulating party policies                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Representing the party in public events                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Running for party office   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Participating in parties or social events                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Demonstrating  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fighting against the activities of other parties                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

#### Your official positions

Are you currently or have you ever been elected to a position (e.g. delegate or member of a committee) within the SPD or the Jusos?

|                | Yes, currently        | Yes, in the past      | No                    | don't know            |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| within the SPD | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| within Jusos   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



If yes: What was the highest level where you have ever been elected to a position?

|                | the local level       | the regional level    | the national level    | I was never elected to a position |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| within the SPD | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             |
| within Jusos   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>             |

How active would you say are your generally in the party?

|              | not active at all     | not active            | active                | very active           | don't know            |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| with the SPD | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| with Jusos   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Other groups and organizations

Are you currently active in other political groups or organizations?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

If yes: Which type of group/s or organization/s is/are that? (check all that apply)

☐ (School) student union

☐ Trade union or professional organization

☐ Religious group

☐ Local initiative

☐ Non governmental organization

☐ Another:

Questions regarding your perspective on the SPD

Finally, I would like to ask you some questions regarding your current perspective on the SPD and your opinions about the future.

Influence within the SPD

It is often discussed how much influence party members have within the party. What do you think, how much influence do SPD-members really have on ...

|  | very little influence | little influence      | much influence        | very much influence   | don't know            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ... the policies of the SPD                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... the nomination of SPD candidates for elections | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

... the selection of party leaders ☐

... the decision to join a government ☐

And what do you think, you personally have on ...

|  | very little influence | little influence      | much influence        | very much influence   | don't know            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ... the policies of the SPD                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... the nomination of SPD candidates for elections | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... the selection of party leaders                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ... the decision to join a government              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Party members' influence

In democratic parties, there are often tensions between the aim of members to be involved in decision making and the need of the party leadership to react quickly to political issues.

If you had to decide between these two generally, what would you prefer?

| Members should always be involved in decision making. | Leadership should make decision quickly. |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 0                               | <input type="radio"/> 10                 |
| <input type="radio"/> 1                               | <input type="radio"/> 9                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 2                               | <input type="radio"/> 8                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 3                               | <input type="radio"/> 7                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 4                               | <input type="radio"/> 6                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 5                               | <input type="radio"/> 5                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 6                               | <input type="radio"/> 4                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 7                               | <input type="radio"/> 3                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 8                               | <input type="radio"/> 2                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 9                               | <input type="radio"/> 1                  |
| <input type="radio"/> 10                              | <input type="radio"/> 0                  |
| <input type="radio"/> don't know                      | <input type="radio"/> don't know         |

And how would you say is the real situation in the SPD currently?

| Leadership makes decisions quickly. | Members are always involved in decision making. |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> 10            | <input type="radio"/> don't know                |
| <input type="radio"/> 9             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 8             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 7             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 6             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 5             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 4             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 3             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 2             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 1             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> 0             |   |

Political issues

You already answered a question regarding your political priorities. Now, think about the SPD in general. How important, do you think, are the following issues for the SPD at the moment?

|  | not at all important  | not important         | important             | very important        | don't know            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Fight unemployment                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lower taxes and changes                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Protect the environment                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Strive for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fight crime  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reduce social inequalities                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Reduce racial inequalities                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Foster gender equality ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Reasons for party membership

Reasons for party membership can change over time. Please indicate how important the following reasons are currently for your membership:

|  | not important         |                       | important             |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|  | at all                | not important         | important             | very important        | don't know            |
| Because I am interested in a party office or a mandate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To meet interesting people                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because a party leader impressed me                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To act as a responsible citizen                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To do something meaningful                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To be able to get better information about politics    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because I identify with the values of the party        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To have networks and contacts                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To meet like minded others                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To influence the politics of the party                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Due to influence of family or friends                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To support a specific person in elections              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To support the goals of the party                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To gain personal or professional benefits              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because I enjoy political activities                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Out of habit   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Because a rank and file party member impressed me      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| To change something in society                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Thinking about the future

Now think about ten years from now. How likely will it be until then that you ...

|  | not at all likely     |                       | very likely           |                       |  |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
|  | not very likely       | likely                | likely                | don't know            |  |
| ... hold a position within the SPD or a mandate for the SPD? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |  |
| ... hold a position in government or public administration?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |  |
| ... have withdrawn your SPD membership?                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |  |
| ... support another party or organization?                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |  |

Thank you very much!

You finished the questionnaire. Thank you for your support!

Raffle

There will be a raffle among all participants of the questionnaire. You could win a **20 EUR gift voucher for online shopping**. Of course, your participation in the raffle is voluntary. If you want to participate, we need a valid email address to contact you in case you win.

The email address is stored separately from your answers to ensure your privacy. All email addresses will be deleted after the lottery.

- ☐ I want to participate in the raffle. I agree that my e-mail address is saved for the drawing of the winners. My data will remain anonymous, and my e-mail address will not be shared with any third party.
- ☐ I am interested in the results of this study. Please send me an abstract by e-mail.

Thank you very much for answering the questionnaire!

Your participation helped me a lot with my work. If you have any questions or comments you can reach me via the following way:

Contact

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Survey of young party members

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## A.6 Quality of Survey Data and Handling of Missing Values

The survey was implemented using the online survey tool [www.soscisurvey.de](http://www.soscisurvey.de). A link was used to spread the questionnaire, using a common pass phrase for all participants. This excludes that an external person that accidentally gets access to the survey via internet can answer the questionnaire, but everyone who knew the full survey link was able to use it. The link was sent via email with an introductory note via email on Mar 11th 2015 to 42080 email addresses. The email was sent by the communication section of the SPD headquarter, using the official party data base and filtering all party members younger than 36 years.

The final data set was downloaded from [www.soscisurvey.de](http://www.soscisurvey.de). The questionnaire was answered 4922 in total, out of which 4129 respondents completed the questionnaire. These finished cases are used to calculate the gross return rate of 9.8%. These cases were checked for their completion time and their number of missing values to identify meaningless cases. The survey platform offers an indicator `DEG_TIME` to identify cases which completed the questionnaire too quickly and an indicator `DEG_MISS` to identify cases with too much missing data. The time indicator calculates a value for each respondent based on the individual response duration in relation to the median response duration. The indicator stretches between 0 and 100, where 0 indicates cases with an response duration not less than the median and 100 indicates three times the median duration (Sosci Survey 2013). This is used as a first filtering of bad data. 4124 cases remain after that in the data set. The `DEG_MISS` indicates the percentage of missing answers weighted by the other participants answering behaviour. Applying a double filtering using both indicators, all cases with more than 100 degradation points on either time or missing values were deleted, leaving a net sample of 4006 cases (9.5% response rate).

To avoid duplicates, each case got a unique ID build on six variables: sex, month of birth, year of birth, months of joining, year of joining and postal code, e.g. *m12198301201234122* for a male who was born in December 1983, joined the party in January 2012 and lives in the postal code area 34122. This id was used to find duplicates. In the net data set, nine cases were duplicated, all of them due to missing variables in at least three of the

variables that build up the id. We can therefore exclude data fraud caused by multiple answering of the same people.

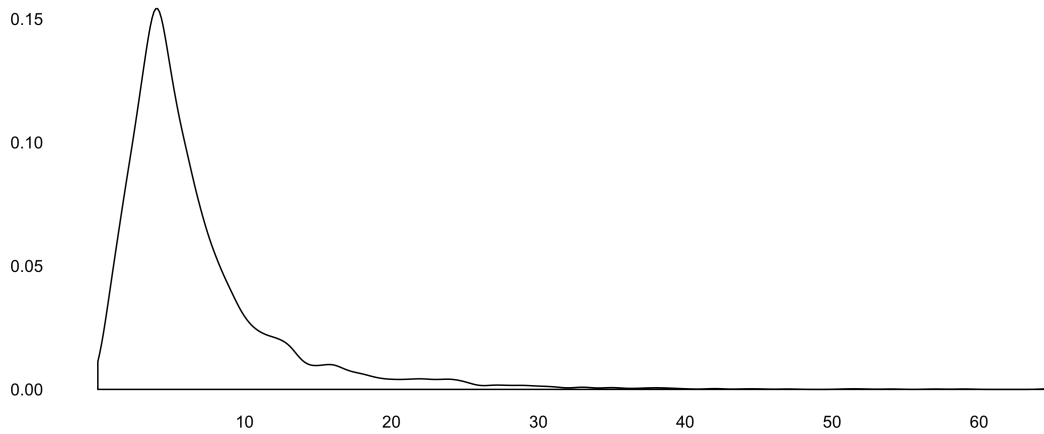
## Handling of Missing Values

Item non response is a general issue in survey design and there is little to prevent it. As a result, the handling of missing data accompanies all survey research (Leeuw 2001, 147). The problem of missing values in a data set causes general problems in statistical analysis, since the majority of advanced statistical procedures requires valid values on all used variables. The standard procedure in statistical software is to exclude all cases with a missing value on at least one variable (pair-wise deletion). This procedure usually results in an sincere loss of valid information, if not in biased analysis (Cole 2008).

The handling of missing data can be done using different kind of imputation methods, depending on the type of missing data. The important distinction is between those data that is systematically biased, because the variable measures something related to the construct of the variable and data that is randomly missing. The first type of data is called *not missing at random*, (*NMAR*) while the latter is either *missing completely at random*, (*MCAR*), if the complete cases are a random sample of the full sample or *missing at random*, (*MAR*), if the missingness is not completely random, but not related to the variable itself (Rubin 1976).

The net data set shows a good data quality. The number of item non-responses per case stretches from 0 to 65. It is low for most cases as the density plot in Figure A.1 pictures. It shows that the overall majority of cases has less than 10% missing values. To check whether the missing values are related to skimming through the questionnaire, a correlation check of the number of missing values with the time needed for the questionnaire was performed (in seconds). There was a statistically significant correlation of  $r=0.1$ , so we can say that there is a connection between answering the questionnaire a bit quicker and leaving more items unanswered, but the correlation is very weak.

Sensitive questions which often have a high number of missing values cover especially financial aspects, questions that are considered to be of very private type, e.g. religion or questions that ask for deviant or unaccepted behaviour. While the latter can be expected not to be part of the questionnaire, the first type of question is limited to



**Figure A.1: The density of missing values per case** in the net data set,  $N=4006$ . The x-axis shows the number of missing values, the y-axis shows the share of cases with the respective number of missing values within the full data set of 214 variables.

the question of membership fees. The second type of question is asked in the item of religious belonging. The questionnaire did not include any items where an answer had to be given. Respondents could skip each question. Some questions were asked only to certain respondents, e.g. the kind of religion (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Other) was only asked to respondents that answered *yes* to the question whether they identify themselves with any religion. This causes a *missing by design* in some questions.

The number of missing values per variable stretches from 0 to 3807, but the distribution of missing values is very skewed. There are in total 19 variables in the data set with a share of missing values of more than 5% (200) and 7 with more than 10% missing (400). The five variables with the most missing values (more than 500) are items that have missing values by design. The variable with the sixth most missing values can be considered to be a sensitive question, as it asks whether someone categorically rules out to ever leave the party. The seventh question with more than 10% missing values seems to be difficult to understand or to know: It asks about the relevance of economic activities of the party for party financing. In general, the number of missing values for the different items is rather small with only few exceptions.

The examination shows that the data quality in general can be considered to be good. As the survey targets a selected population of young people that should be used to online surveys on average, this is not exceptional (Leeuw 2001). Based on the examination of the missing data, a single imputation approach was chosen for those

cases where a pair-wise deletion strategy would cause a loss of data. The univariate analyses in Chapter 3 are based on the full data set and the number of missing values is reported. The latent class analysis in Chapter 6 and the regression analysis in Chapter 7 use single imputation methods as elaborated below.

The data set for the latent class analysis and the regression analysis includes 34 variables. Table A.3 gives an overview over the single imputation rules for the data. As a general rule, all dummies and categorical variables are replaced with the mode, and all metric variables are replaced with the rounded mean. Two variables had with more than 5% missing values (200). The missing values of the education period in years are replaced using regression imputation due to the good quality variables related to the item.

| Variable          | Count of NA | Method     | Imputation value   |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|--|
| Supportgoals      | 42          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Supportperson     | 46          | mode       | 1.00   |
| Seekinfluence     | 61          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Meaningful        | 60          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Change            | 35          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Responsibility    | 57          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Office            | 52          | mode       | 1.00   |
| Benefits          | 48          | mode       | 1.00   |
| Interestingpeople | 37          | mode       | 1.00   |
| Information       | 28          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Networks          | 36          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Activities        | 82          | mode       | 2.00   |
| Likeminded        | 42          | mode       | 2.00   |
| women             | 90          | mode       | 0.00   |
| union             | 29          | mode       | 0.00   |
| child             | 5           | mode       | 0.00   |
| mainoccu          | 25          | mode       | 2.00   |
| student           | 25          | mode       | 1.00   |
| working           | 25          | mode       | 0.00   |
| education         | 223         | regression | $edu = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot edulevel + \beta_2 \cdot student + \beta_3 \cdot age, R^2=0.45$ |
| edulevel          | 34          | mode       | 4.00   |
| age               | 108         | mean       | 26.35  |
| joinyear          | 81          | mean       | 2009.43  |
| ownclass          | 9           | mode       | 3.00   |
| parclass          | 4           | mode       | 3.00   |
| parmbr            | 27          | mode       | 0.00   |
| beforeact         | 34          | mode       | 0.00   |
| votele            | 6           | mode       | 1.00   |
| leftright         | 67          | mean       | 3.03   |
| tradeoff          | 92          | mean       | 7.06   |
| votediff          | 112         | mode       | 1.00   |
| closeSPD          | 15          | mean       | 7.07   |
| polint            | 25          | mean       | 8.93   |
| activeseek        | 226         | mode       | 1.00   |
| activitySPD       | 161         | mean       | 4.09   |
| otheractivism     | 36          | mode       | 0.00   |
| incumbentJO       | 183         | mode       | 0.00   |
| incumbentSPD      | 78          | mode       | 0.00   |
| efficacydist      | 296         | mean       | -0.57  |
| involvedist       | 146         | mean       | 2.69   |
| pmindex           | 42          | mean       | 2.20   |
| distance          | 161         | mean       | -0.04  |
| SPDposition       | 159         | mode       | 1.00   |
| mandategvmt       | 237         | mode       | 0.00   |
| exit              | 245         | mode       | 0.00   |
| involveSPD        | 133         | mean       | 3.22   |
| involvembr        | 43          | mean       | 5.89   |

**Table A.3: Handling of missing data** for the analysis in Chapter 6 and 7. Missing values in all categorical and dummy variables are replaced with the mode, those in metric variables are replaced with the two decimal places rounded mean. Missing values of education in years is replaced by a regression imputation.

## A.7 Comprehensive Frequencies of Survey Items

|                       | <i>value</i>                                | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| Sex                   |   |                  |              |
|                       | male  | 2846             | 71%          |
|                       | female                                      | 1058             | 26%          |
|                       | other                                       | 12               | 0%           |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 90               | 2%           |
| Citizenship           |   |                  |              |
|                       | German                                      | 3718             | 93%          |
|                       | German and another                          | 161              | 4%           |
|                       | Another                                     | 48               | 1%           |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 79               | 2%           |
| Living situation      |   |                  |              |
|                       | with my partner                             | 948              | 24%          |
|                       | with my partner and child(ren)              | 348              | 9%           |
|                       | alone with child(ren)                       | 19               | 0%           |
|                       | with my parents or relatives                | 993              | 25%          |
|                       | in a shared flat                            | 746              | 19%          |
|                       | alone                                       | 876              | 22%          |
|                       | with my parents or relatives and child(ren) | 71               | 2%           |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 5                | 0%           |
| First language        |   |                  |              |
|                       | German                                      | 3815             | 95%          |
|                       | Another                                     | 166              | 4%           |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 25               | 1%           |
| Highest school degree |   |                  |              |
|                       | None  | 44               | 1%           |
|                       | Basic education                             | 46               | 1%           |
|                       | Middle school                               | 406              | 10%          |
|                       | High school diploma                         | 3463             | 86%          |
|                       | Another                                     | 41               | 1%           |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 6                | 0%           |
| Religious belonging   |   |                  |              |
|                       | Yes   | 2147             | 54%          |
|                       | No  | 1633             | 41%          |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 226              | 6%           |
| Type of religion      |   |                  |              |
|                       | Christian                                   | 1997             | 50%          |
|                       | Muslim                                      | 95               | 2%           |
|                       | Jewish                                      | 15               | 0%           |
|                       | Another                                     | 40               | 1%           |
|                       | None  | 1631             | 41%          |
|                       | <i>Missing</i>                              | 228              | 6%           |
| Education in Years    |   |                  |              |
|                       | 9   | 14               | 0%           |
|                       | 10  | 82               | 2%           |
|                       | 11  | 106              | 3%           |
|                       | 12  | 266              | 7%           |
|                       | 13  | 499              | 12%          |
|                       | 14  | 303              | 8%           |
|                       | 15  | 355              | 9%           |
|                       | 16  | 367              | 9%           |



# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|   | <i>value</i>                  | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
|   | 17                            | 330              | 8%           |
|   | 18                            | 436              | 11%          |
|   | 19                            | 356              | 9%           |
|   | 20                            | 323              | 8%           |
|   | 21                            | 132              | 3%           |
|   | 22                            | 83               | 2%           |
|   | 23                            | 74               | 2%           |
|   | 24                            | 23               | 1%           |
|   | 25                            | 17               | 0%           |
|   | 26                            | 9                | 0%           |
|   | 27                            | 4                | 0%           |
|   | 28                            | 3                | 0%           |
|   | 30                            | 1                | 0%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>                | 223              | 6%           |
| Intensity of religion                   |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 1152             | 29%          |
|   | 1                             | 504              | 13%          |
|   | 2                             | 481              | 12%          |
|   | 3                             | 364              | 9%           |
|   | 4                             | 185              | 5%           |
|   | 5                             | 309              | 8%           |
|   | 6                             | 280              | 7%           |
|   | 7                             | 313              | 8%           |
|   | 8                             | 265              | 7%           |
|   | 9                             | 98               | 2%           |
|   | 10                            | 54               | 1%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>                | 1                | 0%           |
| Highest professional degree             |                               |                  |              |
|   | None                          | 1226             | 31%          |
|   | Basic professional training   | 604              | 15%          |
|   | Further professional training | 69               | 2%           |
|   | Bachelor degree               | 752              | 19%          |
|   | Master degree                 | 1142             | 29%          |
|   | PhD degree                    | 94               | 2%           |
|   | another                       | 85               | 2%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>                | 34               | 1%           |
| School student                          |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 3509             | 88%          |
|   | Yes                           | 497              | 12%          |
| Higher education (B.A. or M.A.) student |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 2230             | 56%          |
|   | Yes                           | 1776             | 44%          |
| PhD student                             |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 3753             | 94%          |
|   | Yes                           | 253              | 6%           |
| Vocational training                     |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 3738             | 93%          |
|   | Yes                           | 268              | 7%           |
| In paid work (full-time)                |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 2636             | 66%          |
|   | Yes                           | 1370             | 34%          |
| In paid work (part-time)                |                               |                  |              |
|   | No                            | 3318             | 83%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|                              | <i>value</i>                           | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|------------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|
| Housework, care work         | Yes                                    | 688              | 17%          |
|                              | No                                     | 3940             | 98%          |
| Unemployed                   | Yes                                    | 66               | 2%           |
|                              | No                                     | 3786             | 95%          |
| Permanently disabled to work | Yes                                    | 220              | 5%           |
|                              | No                                     | 3988             | 100%         |
| Main occupation              | v                                      | 18               | 0%           |
|                              | Disabled                               | 12               | 0%           |
|                              | Houseworker                            | 60               | 1%           |
|                              | PhD                                    | 162              | 4%           |
|                              | Pupil                                  | 418              | 10%          |
|                              | Student                                | 1402             | 35%          |
|                              | Unemployed                             | 153              | 4%           |
|                              | Voc training                           | 255              | 6%           |
|                              | Work full-time                         | 1204             | 30%          |
|                              | Work part-time                         | 315              | 8%           |
|                              | Missing                                | 25               | 1%           |
| Union member                 | Yes, currently                         | 1171             | 29%          |
|                              | Yes, previously                        | 163              | 4%           |
|                              | No                                     | 2643             | 66%          |
|                              | Missing                                | 29               | 1%           |
| Occupational group           | Self-employed or Freelancer            | 89               | 2%           |
|                              | Executive employee                     | 193              | 5%           |
|                              | Executive civil servant                | 68               | 2%           |
|                              | Trained worker or manufacturer         | 130              | 3%           |
|                              | Other employee                         | 956              | 24%          |
|                              | Other civil servant                    | 107              | 3%           |
|                              | Other                                  | 73               | 2%           |
|                              | Other worker                           | 64               | 2%           |
|                              | Missing                                | 2326             | 58%          |
| Occupational sector          | In government or public administration | 518              | 13%          |
|                              | In the service sector                  | 739              | 18%          |
|                              | In the industry                        | 199              | 5%           |
|                              | In agriculture                         | 7                | 0%           |
|                              | In higher education/academia           | 192              | 5%           |
|                              | Missing                                | 2351             | 59%          |
| Year of birth                | 1979                                   | 1                | 0%           |
|                              | 1980                                   | 5                | 0%           |
|                              | 1981                                   | 197              | 5%           |
|                              | 1982                                   | 245              | 6%           |
|                              | 1983                                   | 258              | 6%           |
|                              | 1984                                   | 235              | 6%           |
|                              | 1985                                   | 233              | 6%           |
|                              | 1986                                   | 266              | 7%           |
|                              | 1987                                   | 285              | 7%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|                                | <i>value</i>          | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|
|                                | 1988                  | 274              | 7%           |
|                                | 1989                  | 268              | 7%           |
|                                | 1990                  | 250              | 6%           |
|                                | 1991                  | 218              | 5%           |
|                                | 1992                  | 214              | 5%           |
|                                | 1993                  | 191              | 5%           |
|                                | 1994                  | 197              | 5%           |
|                                | 1995                  | 186              | 5%           |
|                                | 1996                  | 123              | 3%           |
|                                | 1997                  | 130              | 3%           |
|                                | 1998                  | 71               | 2%           |
|                                | 1999                  | 31               | 1%           |
|                                | 2000                  | 20               | 0%           |
|                                | <i>Missing</i>        | 108              | 3%           |
| Own class belonging            |                       |                  |              |
|                                | Working class         | 99               | 2%           |
|                                | Lower middle class    | 673              | 17%          |
|                                | Middle class          | 2007             | 50%          |
|                                | Upper middle class    | 991              | 25%          |
|                                | Upper class           | 48               | 1%           |
|                                | None of these classes | 179              | 4%           |
|                                | <i>Missing</i>        | 9                | 0%           |
| Month of birth                 |                       |                  |              |
|                                | January               | 335              | 8%           |
|                                | February              | 302              | 8%           |
|                                | March                 | 298              | 7%           |
|                                | April                 | 298              | 7%           |
|                                | May                   | 305              | 8%           |
|                                | June                  | 328              | 8%           |
|                                | July                  | 343              | 9%           |
|                                | August                | 355              | 9%           |
|                                | September             | 369              | 9%           |
|                                | October               | 337              | 8%           |
|                                | November              | 262              | 7%           |
|                                | December              | 298              | 7%           |
|                                | <i>Missing</i>        | 176              | 4%           |
| Parents class belonging        |                       |                  |              |
|                                | Working class         | 170              | 4%           |
|                                | Lower middle class    | 973              | 24%          |
|                                | Middle class          | 1993             | 50%          |
|                                | Upper middle class    | 799              | 20%          |
|                                | Upper class           | 45               | 1%           |
|                                | None of these classes | 22               | 1%           |
|                                | <i>Missing</i>        | 4                | 0%           |
| Importance: Political interest |                       |                  |              |
|                                | 2                     | 6                | 0%           |
|                                | 3                     | 8                | 0%           |
|                                | 4                     | 8                | 0%           |
|                                | 5                     | 38               | 1%           |
|                                | 6                     | 86               | 2%           |
|                                | 7                     | 287              | 7%           |
|                                | 8                     | 862              | 22%          |
|                                | 9                     | 1007             | 25%          |
|                                | 10                    | 1679             | 42%          |
|                                | <i>Missing</i>        | 25               | 1%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>  | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| Importance: Fight unemployment                          |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 18               | 0%           |
| not important   | 86               | 2%           |
| important   | 1712             | 43%          |
| very important  | 2168             | 54%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 22               | 1%           |
| Importance: Lower taxes and charges                     |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 642              | 16%          |
| not important   | 1816             | 45%          |
| important   | 1173             | 29%          |
| very important  | 258              | 6%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 117              | 3%           |
| Importance: Protect the environment                     |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 51               | 1%           |
| not important   | 326              | 8%           |
| important   | 2181             | 54%          |
| very important  | 1415             | 35%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 33               | 1%           |
| Importance: Fostering European integration              |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 69               | 2%           |
| not important   | 355              | 9%           |
| important   | 1651             | 41%          |
| very important  | 1821             | 45%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 110              | 3%           |
| Importance: Fight crime                                 |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 99               | 2%           |
| not important   | 787              | 20%          |
| important   | 2162             | 54%          |
| very important  | 883              | 22%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 75               | 2%           |
| Importance: Reduce social inequalities                  |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 9                | 0%           |
| not important   | 61               | 2%           |
| important   | 735              | 18%          |
| very important  | 3181             | 79%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 20               | 0%           |
| Importance: Reduce racial inequalities                  |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 34               | 1%           |
| not important   | 179              | 4%           |
| important   | 1156             | 29%          |
| very important  | 2605             | 65%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 32               | 1%           |
| Importance: Foster gender equality                      |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 172              | 4%           |
| not important   | 610              | 15%          |
| important   | 1680             | 42%          |
| very important  | 1505             | 38%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 39               | 1%           |
| Tradeoff: increasing taxes and reducing social benefits |                  |              |
| 0 (Reducing social benefits)                            | 23               | 1%           |
| 1   | 24               | 1%           |
| 2   | 62               | 2%           |
| 3   | 103              | 3%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|                                 | <i>value</i>          | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Left-right scale                | 4                     | 162              | 4%           |
|                                 | 5                     | 605              | 15%          |
|                                 | 6                     | 477              | 12%          |
|                                 | 7                     | 657              | 16%          |
|                                 | 8                     | 762              | 19%          |
|                                 | 9                     | 426              | 11%          |
|                                 | 10 (Increasing taxes) | 613              | 15%          |
|                                 | <i>Missing</i>        | 92               | 2%           |
| Ranked: Fight unemployment      | 0 (Left)              | 193              | 5%           |
|                                 | 1                     | 333              | 8%           |
|                                 | 2                     | 976              | 24%          |
|                                 | 3                     | 1132             | 28%          |
|                                 | 4                     | 675              | 17%          |
|                                 | 5                     | 375              | 9%           |
|                                 | 6                     | 142              | 4%           |
|                                 | 7                     | 77               | 2%           |
|                                 | 8                     | 28               | 1%           |
|                                 | 9                     | 5                | 0%           |
|                                 | 10 (Right)            | 3                | 0%           |
|                                 | <i>Missing</i>        | 67               | 2%           |
| Ranked: Lower taxes and charges | 1                     | 531              | 13%          |
|                                 | 2                     | 807              | 20%          |
|                                 | 3                     | 592              | 15%          |
|                                 | 4                     | 476              | 12%          |
|                                 | 5                     | 472              | 12%          |
|                                 | 6                     | 392              | 10%          |
|                                 | 7                     | 338              | 8%           |
|                                 | 8                     | 248              | 6%           |
|                                 | 9                     | 88               | 2%           |
|                                 | 10                    | 19               | 0%           |
|                                 | <i>Missing</i>        | 43               | 1%           |
| Ranked: Protect the environment | 1                     | 72               | 2%           |
|                                 | 2                     | 101              | 3%           |
|                                 | 3                     | 120              | 3%           |
|                                 | 4                     | 134              | 3%           |
|                                 | 5                     | 172              | 4%           |
|                                 | 6                     | 183              | 5%           |
|                                 | 7                     | 228              | 6%           |
|                                 | 8                     | 371              | 9%           |
|                                 | 9                     | 604              | 15%          |
|                                 | 10                    | 1952             | 49%          |
|                                 | <i>Missing</i>        | 69               | 2%           |
|                                 | 1                     | 228              | 6%           |
|                                 | 2                     | 378              | 9%           |
|                                 | 3                     | 407              | 10%          |
|                                 | 4                     | 442              | 11%          |
|                                 | 5                     | 475              | 12%          |
|                                 | 6                     | 512              | 13%          |
|                                 | 7                     | 566              | 14%          |
|                                 | 8                     | 475              | 12%          |
|                                 | 9                     | 319              | 8%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|  | <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|----------------|------------------|--------------|
|  | 10             | 159              | 4%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i> | 45               | 1%           |
| Ranked: Fostering European integration |                |                  |              |
|  | 1              | 352              | 9%           |
|  | 2              | 465              | 12%          |
|  | 3              | 461              | 12%          |
|  | 4              | 418              | 10%          |
|  | 5              | 435              | 11%          |
|  | 6              | 497              | 12%          |
|  | 7              | 422              | 11%          |
|  | 8              | 375              | 9%           |
|  | 9              | 320              | 8%           |
|  | 10             | 215              | 5%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i> | 46               | 1%           |
| Ranked: Fight crime                    |                |                  |              |
|  | 1              | 104              | 3%           |
|  | 2              | 175              | 4%           |
|  | 3              | 242              | 6%           |
|  | 4              | 284              | 7%           |
|  | 5              | 289              | 7%           |
|  | 6              | 348              | 9%           |
|  | 7              | 476              | 12%          |
|  | 8              | 611              | 15%          |
|  | 9              | 1000             | 25%          |
|  | 10             | 426              | 11%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i> | 51               | 1%           |
| Ranked: Reduce social inequalities     |                |                  |              |
|  | 1              | 2057             | 51%          |
|  | 2              | 701              | 17%          |
|  | 3              | 429              | 11%          |
|  | 4              | 302              | 8%           |
|  | 5              | 190              | 5%           |
|  | 6              | 117              | 3%           |
|  | 7              | 89               | 2%           |
|  | 8              | 45               | 1%           |
|  | 9              | 18               | 0%           |
|  | 10             | 15               | 0%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i> | 43               | 1%           |
| Ranked: Reduce racial inequalities     |                |                  |              |
|  | 1              | 286              | 7%           |
|  | 2              | 580              | 14%          |
|  | 3              | 612              | 15%          |
|  | 4              | 637              | 16%          |
|  | 5              | 577              | 14%          |
|  | 6              | 506              | 13%          |
|  | 7              | 329              | 8%           |
|  | 8              | 251              | 6%           |
|  | 9              | 147              | 4%           |
|  | 10             | 38               | 1%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i> | 43               | 1%           |
| Ranked: Foster gender equality         |                |                  |              |
|  | 1              | 66               | 2%           |
|  | 2              | 285              | 7%           |
|  | 3              | 377              | 9%           |
|  | 4              | 438              | 11%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| 5  | 404              | 10%          |
| 6  | 471              | 12%          |
| 7  | 491              | 12%          |
| 8  | 457              | 11%          |
| 9  | 470              | 12%          |
| 10   | 497              | 12%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 50               | 1%           |
| Voted last national election                               |                  |              |
| Yes  | 3489             | 87%          |
| No   | 39               | 1%           |
| I was not eligible to vote                                 | 472              | 12%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 6                | 0%           |
| Contacted a politician, government or local official?      |                  |              |
| never  | 882              | 22%          |
| once a year  | 595              | 15%          |
| once in 6 months   | 455              | 11%          |
| once in 3 months   | 494              | 12%          |
| once monthly   | 567              | 14%          |
| several times in a month                                   | 921              | 23%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 92               | 2%           |
| Worked in a political party or action group?               |                  |              |
| never  | 464              | 12%          |
| once a year  | 337              | 8%           |
| once in 6 months   | 261              | 7%           |
| once in 3 months   | 421              | 11%          |
| once monthly   | 697              | 17%          |
| several times in a month                                   | 1772             | 44%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 54               | 1%           |
| Worked in another organisation or association?             |                  |              |
| never  | 903              | 23%          |
| once a year  | 330              | 8%           |
| once in 6 months   | 342              | 9%           |
| once in 3 months   | 466              | 12%          |
| once monthly   | 606              | 15%          |
| several times in a month                                   | 1242             | 31%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 117              | 3%           |
| Worn or displayed a badge/sticker of a political campaign? |                  |              |
| never  | 1403             | 35%          |
| once a year  | 660              | 16%          |
| once in 6 months   | 483              | 12%          |
| once in 3 months   | 536              | 13%          |
| once monthly   | 369              | 9%           |
| several times in a month                                   | 459              | 11%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 96               | 2%           |
| Signed a petition  |                  |              |
| never  | 1010             | 25%          |
| once a year  | 1022             | 26%          |
| once in 6 months   | 799              | 20%          |
| once in 3 months   | 668              | 17%          |
| once monthly   | 265              | 7%           |
| several times in a month                                   | 166              | 4%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 76               | 2%           |
| Taken part in a lawful public demonstration?               |                  |              |
| never  | 1300             | 32%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>  | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| once a year   | 933              | 23%          |
| once in 6 months  | 664              | 17%          |
| once in 3 months  | 622              | 16%          |
| once monthly  | 248              | 6%           |
| several times in a month  | 192              | 5%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 47               | 1%           |
| Boycotted or purposely bought certain products for political reasons?                   |                  |              |
| never   | 1118             | 28%          |
| once a year   | 369              | 9%           |
| once in 6 months  | 351              | 9%           |
| once in 3 months  | 438              | 11%          |
| once monthly  | 515              | 13%          |
| several times in a month  | 1030             | 26%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 185              | 5%           |
| Those who engage in parties can expect appreciation within the party.                   |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 782              | 20%          |
| agree   | 2108             | 53%          |
| disagree  | 721              | 18%          |
| disagree strongly   | 195              | 5%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 200              | 5%           |
| Those who engage in parties can expect appreciation from outside of the party.          |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 178              | 4%           |
| agree   | 1218             | 30%          |
| disagree  | 1796             | 45%          |
| disagree strongly   | 615              | 15%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 199              | 5%           |
| Parties in general act reliable and responsible.  |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 262              | 7%           |
| agree   | 2116             | 53%          |
| disagree  | 1207             | 30%          |
| disagree strongly   | 266              | 7%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 155              | 4%           |
| Parties are organizations that represent mainly the interests of the elder generations. |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 440              | 11%          |
| agree   | 1365             | 34%          |
| disagree  | 1507             | 38%          |
| disagree strongly   | 589              | 15%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 105              | 3%           |
| Work in political parties is mainly dominated by elder party members.                   |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 1214             | 30%          |
| agree   | 1848             | 46%          |
| disagree  | 685              | 17%          |
| disagree strongly   | 144              | 4%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 115              | 3%           |
| Parties are the best place to get involved as a citizen with influencing politics.      |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 1295             | 32%          |
| agree   | 1782             | 44%          |
| disagree  | 662              | 17%          |
| disagree strongly   | 145              | 4%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 122              | 3%           |
| Without my party membership I could not articulate my interests towards politics.       |                  |              |
| strongly agree  | 405              | 10%          |
| agree   | 1183             | 30%          |



# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| disagree   | 1423             | 36%          |
| disagree strongly  | 869              | 22%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 126              | 3%           |
| Work in a political party is very bureaucratic and requires a lot of administrative tasks.         |                  |              |
| strongly agree   | 682              | 17%          |
| agree  | 1831             | 46%          |
| disagree   | 1077             | 27%          |
| disagree strongly  | 169              | 4%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 247              | 6%           |
| Party meetings are boring events for most people.  |                  |              |
| strongly agree   | 849              | 21%          |
| agree  | 1812             | 45%          |
| disagree   | 927              | 23%          |
| disagree strongly  | 215              | 5%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 203              | 5%           |
| Parties are only interested in winning elections, not in certain issues.                           |                  |              |
| strongly agree   | 234              | 6%           |
| agree  | 951              | 24%          |
| disagree   | 1886             | 47%          |
| disagree strongly  | 880              | 22%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 55               | 1%           |
| Parties in general are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions.                   |                  |              |
| strongly agree   | 186              | 5%           |
| agree  | 828              | 21%          |
| disagree   | 1961             | 49%          |
| disagree strongly  | 961              | 24%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 70               | 2%           |
| Decision making in parties is done by the leadership, a rank and file member has little influence. |                  |              |
| strongly agree   | 784              | 20%          |
| agree  | 1774             | 44%          |
| disagree   | 1122             | 28%          |
| disagree strongly  | 249              | 6%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 77               | 2%           |
| Closeness to the party   |                  |              |
| 0 (not at all close)   | 26               | 1%           |
| 1  | 39               | 1%           |
| 2  | 99               | 2%           |
| 3  | 132              | 3%           |
| 4  | 118              | 3%           |
| 5  | 212              | 5%           |
| 6  | 460              | 11%          |
| 7  | 1018             | 25%          |
| 8  | 1083             | 27%          |
| 9  | 531              | 13%          |
| 10 (very close)  | 273              | 7%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 15               | 0%           |
| Parents membership   |                  |              |
| Yes, both  | 339              | 8%           |
| Yes, one parent  | 676              | 17%          |
| No   | 2964             | 74%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 27               | 1%           |
| Ruling out to withdraw mebership   |                  |              |
| Yes  | 1210             | 30%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|  | <i>value</i>         | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Considered withdrawing                             | No                   | 2316             | 58%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 480              | 12%          |
| Explicit reasons to leave                          | Yes                  | 1351             | 34%          |
|  | No                   | 2152             | 54%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 503              | 13%          |
| Voted different in national elections              | No                   | 496              | 12%          |
|  | Yes                  | 1243             | 31%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 2267             | 57%          |
| Voted different in regional elections              | No                   | 2338             | 58%          |
|  | One different party  | 1041             | 26%          |
|  | Several parties      | 519              | 13%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 108              | 3%           |
| Fees paid to the party in the past 12 months       | No                   | 2519             | 63%          |
|  | One different party  | 687              | 17%          |
|  | Several parties      | 674              | 17%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 126              | 3%           |
| Importance of membership fees                      | Minimum              | 0 EUR            |              |
|  | 1. Quart.            | 30 EUR           |              |
|  | Median               | 50 EUR           |              |
|  | Mean                 | 132 EUR          |              |
|  | 3. Quart.            | 100 EUR          |              |
|  | Maximum              | 5000 EUR         |              |
| Importance of public financing from taxes          | <i>Missing</i>       | 142              | 3.5%         |
|  | not at all important | 44               | 1%           |
|  | not important        | 380              | 9%           |
|  | important            | 1905             | 48%          |
|  | very important       | 1579             | 39%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 98               | 2%           |
| Importance of donations from individual supporters | not at all important | 33               | 1%           |
|  | not important        | 132              | 3%           |
|  | important            | 1389             | 35%          |
|  | very important       | 2309             | 58%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 143              | 4%           |
| Importance of donations from companies             | not at all important | 59               | 1%           |
|  | not important        | 819              | 20%          |
|  | important            | 2007             | 50%          |
|  | very important       | 961              | 24%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 160              | 4%           |
|  | not at all important | 123              | 3%           |
|  | not important        | 712              | 18%          |
|  | important            | 1749             | 44%          |
|  | very important       | 1244             | 31%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 178              | 4%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|  | <i>value</i>         | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Importance of for-profit activities of the SPD |                      |                  |              |
|  | not at all important | 214              | 5%           |
|  | not important        | 1200             | 30%          |
|  | important            | 1585             | 40%          |
|  | very important       | 602              | 15%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 405              | 10%          |
| Month of joining                               |                      |                  |              |
|  | January              | 413              | 10%          |
|  | February             | 238              | 6%           |
|  | March                | 264              | 7%           |
|  | April                | 286              | 7%           |
|  | May                  | 318              | 8%           |
|  | June                 | 299              | 7%           |
|  | July                 | 254              | 6%           |
|  | August               | 296              | 7%           |
|  | September            | 458              | 11%          |
|  | October              | 449              | 11%          |
|  | November             | 283              | 7%           |
|  | December             | 300              | 7%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 148              | 4%           |
| Year of joining                                |                      |                  |              |
|  | 1994                 | 4                | 0%           |
|  | 1995                 | 1                | 0%           |
|  | 1996                 | 4                | 0%           |
|  | 1997                 | 16               | 0%           |
|  | 1998                 | 45               | 1%           |
|  | 1999                 | 39               | 1%           |
|  | 2000                 | 54               | 1%           |
|  | 2001                 | 72               | 2%           |
|  | 2002                 | 104              | 3%           |
|  | 2003                 | 97               | 2%           |
|  | 2004                 | 127              | 3%           |
|  | 2005                 | 221              | 6%           |
|  | 2006                 | 124              | 3%           |
|  | 2007                 | 178              | 4%           |
|  | 2008                 | 245              | 6%           |
|  | 2009                 | 404              | 10%          |
|  | 2010                 | 242              | 6%           |
|  | 2011                 | 287              | 7%           |
|  | 2012                 | 372              | 9%           |
|  | 2013                 | 621              | 16%          |
|  | 2014                 | 668              | 17%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 81               | 2%           |
| Member of a different party before             |                      |                  |              |
|  | Yes                  | 165              | 4%           |
|  | No                   | 3835             | 96%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 6                | 0%           |
| Which different party                          |                      |                  |              |
|  | CDU/CSU              | 37               | 1%           |
|  | B90/Gruene           | 41               | 1%           |
|  | Linke                | 28               | 1%           |
|  | FDP                  | 16               | 0%           |
|  | Piraten              | 13               | 0%           |
|  | another              | 64               | 2%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i>       | 3807             | 95%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>  | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| Member of an organisation before                        |                  |              |
| Yes   | 1602             | 40%          |
| No  | 2370             | 59%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 34               | 1%           |
| Before: (School) student union                          |                  |              |
| No  | 2998             | 75%          |
| Yes   | 1008             | 25%          |
| Before: Trade union or professional organization        |                  |              |
| No  | 3753             | 94%          |
| Yes   | 253              | 6%           |
| Before: Religious group                                 |                  |              |
| No  | 3531             | 88%          |
| Yes   | 475              | 12%          |
| Before: Local initiative                                |                  |              |
| No  | 3877             | 97%          |
| Yes   | 129              | 3%           |
| Before: Non governmental organization                   |                  |              |
| No  | 3699             | 92%          |
| Yes   | 307              | 8%           |
| Before: another   |                  |              |
| No  | 3801             | 95%          |
| Yes   | 205              | 5%           |
| Contact with the party before joining                   |                  |              |
| Yes   | 2537             | 63%          |
| No  | 1415             | 35%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 54               | 1%           |
| Type of first contact with the party                    |                  |              |
| I approached  | 2312             | 58%          |
| I was approached by a known member                      | 1231             | 31%          |
| I was approached by an unknown member                   | 237              | 6%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 226              | 6%           |
| Joined: To support the goals of the party               |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 149              | 4%           |
| not important   | 510              | 13%          |
| important   | 2107             | 53%          |
| very important  | 1198             | 30%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 42               | 1%           |
| Joined: To support a specific person in elections       |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 1251             | 31%          |
| not important   | 1283             | 32%          |
| important   | 1037             | 26%          |
| very important  | 389              | 10%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 46               | 1%           |
| Joined: To influence the politics of the party          |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 203              | 5%           |
| not important   | 799              | 20%          |
| important   | 1770             | 44%          |
| very important  | 1173             | 29%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 61               | 2%           |
| Joined: Because I identify with the values of the party |                  |              |
| not important at all                                    | 46               | 1%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| not important  | 142              | 4%           |
| important  | 1413             | 35%          |
| very important   | 2382             | 59%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 23               | 1%           |
| Joined: To do something meaningful                             |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 216              | 5%           |
| not important  | 422              | 11%          |
| important  | 1917             | 48%          |
| very important   | 1391             | 35%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 60               | 1%           |
| Joined: To change something in society                         |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 61               | 2%           |
| not important  | 203              | 5%           |
| important  | 1457             | 36%          |
| very important   | 2250             | 56%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 35               | 1%           |
| Joined: To act as a responsible citizen                        |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 347              | 9%           |
| not important  | 751              | 19%          |
| important  | 1787             | 45%          |
| very important   | 1064             | 27%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 57               | 1%           |
| Joined: Because I am interested in a party office or a mandate |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 1090             | 27%          |
| not important  | 1478             | 37%          |
| important  | 975              | 24%          |
| very important   | 411              | 10%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 52               | 1%           |
| Joined: To gain personal or professional benefits              |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 1737             | 43%          |
| not important  | 1310             | 33%          |
| important  | 719              | 18%          |
| very important   | 192              | 5%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 48               | 1%           |
| Joined: To meet interesting people                             |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 989              | 25%          |
| not important  | 1402             | 35%          |
| important  | 1207             | 30%          |
| very important   | 371              | 9%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 37               | 1%           |
| Joined: To be able to get better information about politics    |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 449              | 11%          |
| not important  | 867              | 22%          |
| important  | 1737             | 43%          |
| very important   | 925              | 23%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 28               | 1%           |
| Joined: To have networks and contacts                          |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 604              | 15%          |
| not important  | 1170             | 29%          |
| important  | 1566             | 39%          |
| very important   | 630              | 16%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 36               | 1%           |
| Joined: Because I enjoy political activities                   |                  |              |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>  | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| not important at all                                      | 158              | 4%           |
| not important   | 513              | 13%          |
| important   | 1738             | 43%          |
| very important  | 1515             | 38%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 82               | 2%           |
| Joined: To meet like minded others                        |                  |              |
| not important at all                                      | 275              | 7%           |
| not important   | 763              | 19%          |
| important   | 1968             | 49%          |
| very important  | 958              | 24%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 42               | 1%           |
| Joined: Due to influence of family or friends             |                  |              |
| not important at all                                      | 2085             | 52%          |
| not important   | 1077             | 27%          |
| important   | 559              | 14%          |
| very important  | 236              | 6%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 49               | 1%           |
| Joined: Because a party leader impressed me               |                  |              |
| not important at all                                      | 1310             | 33%          |
| not important   | 1141             | 28%          |
| important   | 912              | 23%          |
| very important  | 600              | 15%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 43               | 1%           |
| Joined: Because a rank and file party member impressed me |                  |              |
| not important at all                                      | 1728             | 43%          |
| not important   | 1203             | 30%          |
| important   | 612              | 15%          |
| very important  | 296              | 7%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 167              | 4%           |
| Special occasion made me join                             |                  |              |
| No  | 1742             | 43%          |
| Yes   | 1931             | 48%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 333              | 8%           |
| Spent time with the SPD in past 12 months                 |                  |              |
| never   | 640              | 16%          |
| once a year   | 370              | 9%           |
| once in 6 months  | 308              | 8%           |
| once in 3 months  | 531              | 13%          |
| monthly   | 665              | 17%          |
| several times a month                                     | 1331             | 33%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 161              | 4%           |
| Spent time with Jusos in past 12 months                   |                  |              |
| never   | 1419             | 35%          |
| once a year   | 309              | 8%           |
| once in 6 months  | 256              | 6%           |
| once in 3 months  | 348              | 9%           |
| monthly   | 428              | 11%          |
| several times a month                                     | 965              | 24%          |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 281              | 7%           |
| Activity: Putting posters, handing out Flyers             |                  |              |
| never   | 1599             | 40%          |
| once a year   | 748              | 19%          |
| once in 6 months  | 542              | 14%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| once in 3 months   | 592              | 15%          |
| monthly  | 239              | 6%           |
| several times a month  | 210              | 5%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 76               | 2%           |
| Activity: Supporting the party or a single candidate during election campaigns |                  |              |
| never  | 1244             | 31%          |
| once a year  | 955              | 24%          |
| once in 6 months   | 580              | 14%          |
| once in 3 months   | 464              | 12%          |
| monthly  | 279              | 7%           |
| several times a month  | 376              | 9%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 108              | 3%           |
| Activity: Trying to convince friends and family to support the SPD             |                  |              |
| never  | 1017             | 25%          |
| once a year  | 462              | 12%          |
| once in 6 months   | 523              | 13%          |
| once in 3 months   | 640              | 16%          |
| monthly  | 652              | 16%          |
| several times a month  | 581              | 15%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 131              | 3%           |
| Activity: Participating in internal debates                                    |                  |              |
| never  | 823              | 21%          |
| once a year  | 373              | 9%           |
| once in 6 months   | 381              | 10%          |
| once in 3 months   | 590              | 15%          |
| monthly  | 815              | 20%          |
| several times a month  | 944              | 24%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 80               | 2%           |
| Activity: Participating in formulating party policies                          |                  |              |
| never  | 1628             | 41%          |
| once a year  | 372              | 9%           |
| once in 6 months   | 306              | 8%           |
| once in 3 months   | 485              | 12%          |
| monthly  | 521              | 13%          |
| several times a month  | 585              | 15%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 109              | 3%           |
| Activity: Representing the party in public events                              |                  |              |
| never  | 1852             | 46%          |
| once a year  | 367              | 9%           |
| once in 6 months   | 373              | 9%           |
| once in 3 months   | 503              | 13%          |
| monthly  | 401              | 10%          |
| several times a month  | 427              | 11%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 83               | 2%           |
| Activity: Running for party office   |                  |              |
| never  | 2072             | 52%          |
| once a year  | 1065             | 27%          |
| once in 6 months   | 431              | 11%          |
| once in 3 months   | 201              | 5%           |
| monthly  | 60               | 1%           |
| several times a month  | 98               | 2%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 79               | 2%           |
| Activity: Participating in parties or social events                            |                  |              |
| never  | 942              | 24%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| once a year  | 476              | 12%          |
| once in 6 months   | 701              | 17%          |
| once in 3 months   | 862              | 22%          |
| monthly  | 584              | 15%          |
| several times a month                                      | 369              | 9%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 72               | 2%           |
| Activity: Demonstrating                                    |                  |              |
| never  | 1835             | 46%          |
| once a year  | 688              | 17%          |
| once in 6 months   | 502              | 13%          |
| once in 3 months   | 505              | 13%          |
| monthly  | 213              | 5%           |
| several times a month                                      | 179              | 4%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 84               | 2%           |
| Activity: Fighting against the activities of other parties |                  |              |
| never  | 2501             | 62%          |
| once a year  | 463              | 12%          |
| once in 6 months   | 312              | 8%           |
| once in 3 months   | 301              | 8%           |
| monthly  | 146              | 4%           |
| several times a month                                      | 125              | 3%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 158              | 4%           |
| Incumbent within the SPD                                   |                  |              |
| Yes, currently   | 1542             | 38%          |
| Yes, in the past   | 539              | 13%          |
| No   | 1847             | 46%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 78               | 2%           |
| Incumbent within Young Labor                               |                  |              |
| Yes, currently   | 1006             | 25%          |
| Yes, in the past   | 851              | 21%          |
| No   | 1966             | 49%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 183              | 5%           |
| Level of incumbency within the SPD                         |                  |              |
| Local  | 1845             | 46%          |
| Regional   | 192              | 5%           |
| National   | 53               | 1%           |
| None   | 1798             | 45%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 118              | 3%           |
| Level of incumbency within Young Labor                     |                  |              |
| Local  | 1361             | 34%          |
| Regional   | 391              | 10%          |
| National   | 153              | 4%           |
| None   | 1909             | 48%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 192              | 5%           |
| Activity: with the SPD                                     |                  |              |
| not active at all  | 789              | 20%          |
| not active   | 983              | 25%          |
| active   | 1260             | 31%          |
| very active  | 834              | 21%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 140              | 3%           |
| Activity: with Jusos                                       |                  |              |
| not active at all  | 1454             | 36%          |
| not active   | 871              | 22%          |



# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|  | <i>value</i>          | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Activity: (School) student union                   | active                | 805              | 20%          |
|  | very active           | 655              | 16%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>        | 221              | 6%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Activity: Trade union or professional organization | No                    | 3656             | 91%          |
|  | Yes                   | 350              | 9%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Activity: Religious group                          | No                    | 3530             | 88%          |
|  | Yes                   | 476              | 12%          |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Activity: Local initiative                         | No                    | 3781             | 94%          |
|  | Yes                   | 225              | 6%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Activity: Non governmental organization            | No                    | 3847             | 96%          |
|  | Yes                   | 159              | 4%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Activity: another                                  | No                    | 3627             | 91%          |
|  | Yes                   | 379              | 9%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Active in another organisation                     | No                    | 3717             | 93%          |
|  | Yes                   | 289              | 7%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Member influence on policies                       | Yes                   | 1375             | 34%          |
|  | No                    | 2595             | 65%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>        | 36               | 1%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Member influence on nomination of candidates       | very little influence | 376              | 9%           |
|  | little influence      | 1806             | 45%          |
|  | much influence        | 1595             | 40%          |
|  | very much influence   | 140              | 3%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i>        | 89               | 2%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Member influence on party leader selection         | very little influence | 370              | 9%           |
|  | little influence      | 1358             | 34%          |
|  | much influence        | 1772             | 44%          |
|  | very much influence   | 404              | 10%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>        | 102              | 3%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Member influence on decision to join a government  | very little influence | 1022             | 26%          |
|  | little influence      | 2011             | 50%          |
|  | much influence        | 743              | 19%          |
|  | very much influence   | 106              | 3%           |
|  | <i>Missing</i>        | 124              | 3%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
| Personal influence on policies                     | very little influence | 517              | 13%          |
|  | little influence      | 1207             | 30%          |
|  | much influence        | 1509             | 38%          |
|  | very much influence   | 672              | 17%          |
|  | <i>Missing</i>        | 101              | 3%           |
|  |                       |                  |              |
|  | very little influence | 1306             | 33%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|   | <i>value</i>             | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Personal influence on nomination of candidates                  | little influence         | 1919             | 48%          |
|   | much influence           | 622              | 16%          |
|   | very much influence      | 48               | 1%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 111              | 3%           |
|   |                          |                  |              |
| Personal influence on party leader selection                    | very little influence    | 1365             | 34%          |
|   | little influence         | 1556             | 39%          |
|   | much influence           | 817              | 20%          |
|   | very much influence      | 144              | 4%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 124              | 3%           |
| Personal influence on decision to join a government             | very little influence    | 2229             | 56%          |
|   | little influence         | 1406             | 35%          |
|   | much influence           | 219              | 5%           |
|   | very much influence      | 25               | 1%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 127              | 3%           |
| Tradeoff member involvement and leadership decision, preference | very little influence    | 1494             | 37%          |
|   | little influence         | 1400             | 35%          |
|   | much influence           | 729              | 18%          |
|   | very much influence      | 258              | 6%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 125              | 3%           |
| Membership: To support the goals of the party                   | 0 (Members involvement)  | 265              | 7%           |
|   | 1                        | 180              | 4%           |
|   | 2                        | 531              | 13%          |
|   | 3                        | 711              | 18%          |
|   | 4                        | 612              | 15%          |
|   | 5                        | 595              | 15%          |
|   | 6                        | 384              | 10%          |
|   | 7                        | 389              | 10%          |
|   | 8                        | 224              | 6%           |
|   | 9                        | 40               | 1%           |
|   | 10 (Leadership decision) | 32               | 1%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 43               | 1%           |
|   |                          |                  |              |
| Membership: To support a specific person in elections           | not important at all     | 329              | 8%           |
|   | not important            | 661              | 17%          |
|   | important                | 2004             | 50%          |
|   | very important           | 918              | 23%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 94               | 2%           |
| Membership: To influence the politics of the party              | not important at all     | 1089             | 27%          |
|   | not important            | 1189             | 30%          |
|   | important                | 1235             | 31%          |
|   | very important           | 402              | 10%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 91               | 2%           |
|   | not important at all     | 353              | 9%           |
|   | not important            | 888              | 22%          |
|   | important                | 1763             | 44%          |
|   | very important           | 908              | 23%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 94               | 2%           |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

| <i>value</i>   | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| Membership: Because I identify with the values of the party        |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 101              | 3%           |
| not important  | 266              | 7%           |
| important  | 1581             | 39%          |
| very important   | 1977             | 49%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 81               | 2%           |
| Membership: To do something meaningful                             |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 408              | 10%          |
| not important  | 571              | 14%          |
| important  | 1826             | 46%          |
| very important   | 1102             | 28%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 99               | 2%           |
| Membership: To change something in society                         |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 194              | 5%           |
| not important  | 359              | 9%           |
| important  | 1659             | 41%          |
| very important   | 1701             | 42%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 93               | 2%           |
| Membership: To act as a responsible citizen                        |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 476              | 12%          |
| not important  | 689              | 17%          |
| important  | 1718             | 43%          |
| very important   | 1026             | 26%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 97               | 2%           |
| Membership: Because I am interested in a party office or a mandate |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 1193             | 30%          |
| not important  | 1124             | 28%          |
| important  | 1038             | 26%          |
| very important   | 545              | 14%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 106              | 3%           |
| Membership: To gain personal or professional benefits              |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 1520             | 38%          |
| not important  | 1191             | 30%          |
| important  | 922              | 23%          |
| very important   | 281              | 7%           |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 92               | 2%           |
| Membership: To meet interesting people                             |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 1076             | 27%          |
| not important  | 1169             | 29%          |
| important  | 1271             | 32%          |
| very important   | 398              | 10%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 92               | 2%           |
| Membership: To be able to get better information about politics    |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 642              | 16%          |
| not important  | 805              | 20%          |
| important  | 1623             | 41%          |
| very important   | 853              | 21%          |
| <i>Missing</i>   | 83               | 2%           |
| Membership: To have networks and contacts                          |                  |              |
| not important at all   | 621              | 16%          |
| not important  | 801              | 20%          |
| important  | 1692             | 42%          |
| very important   | 805              | 20%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

|   | <i>value</i>             | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Membership: Because I enjoy political activities              | <i>Missing</i>           | 87               | 2%           |
|   | not important at all     | 381              | 10%          |
|   | not important            | 572              | 14%          |
|   | important                | 1561             | 39%          |
|   | very important           | 1385             | 35%          |
| Membership: To meet like minded others                        | <i>Missing</i>           | 107              | 3%           |
|   | not important at all     | 517              | 13%          |
|   | not important            | 757              | 19%          |
|   | important                | 1805             | 45%          |
|   | very important           | 847              | 21%          |
| Membership: Due to influence of family or friends             | <i>Missing</i>           | 80               | 2%           |
|   | not important at all     | 2342             | 58%          |
|   | not important            | 1024             | 26%          |
|   | important                | 420              | 10%          |
|   | very important           | 116              | 3%           |
| Membership: Out of habit                                      | <i>Missing</i>           | 104              | 3%           |
|   | not important at all     | 1332             | 33%          |
|   | not important            | 1023             | 26%          |
|   | important                | 1071             | 27%          |
|   | very important           | 423              | 11%          |
| Membership: Because a party leader impressed me               | <i>Missing</i>           | 157              | 4%           |
|   | not important at all     | 1851             | 46%          |
|   | not important            | 1133             | 28%          |
|   | important                | 623              | 16%          |
|   | very important           | 304              | 8%           |
| Membership: Because a rank and file party member impressed me | <i>Missing</i>           | 95               | 2%           |
|   | not important at all     | 1924             | 48%          |
|   | not important            | 1102             | 28%          |
|   | important                | 613              | 15%          |
|   | very important           | 231              | 6%           |
| Tradeoff member involvement and leadership decision, SPD      | <i>Missing</i>           | 136              | 3%           |
|   | 0 (Member involvement)   | 24               | 1%           |
|   | 1                        | 28               | 1%           |
|   | 2                        | 63               | 2%           |
|   | 3                        | 163              | 4%           |
| SPDpriorities: Fight unemployment                             | 4                        | 259              | 6%           |
|   | 5                        | 455              | 11%          |
|   | 6                        | 490              | 12%          |
|   | 7                        | 754              | 19%          |
|   | 8                        | 858              | 21%          |
|   | 9                        | 563              | 14%          |
|   | 10 (Leadership decision) | 216              | 5%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>           | 133              | 3%           |
|   | not at all important     | 48               | 1%           |
|   | not important            | 536              | 13%          |

# Appendix A. Data Collection and Preparation: Interviews and Survey

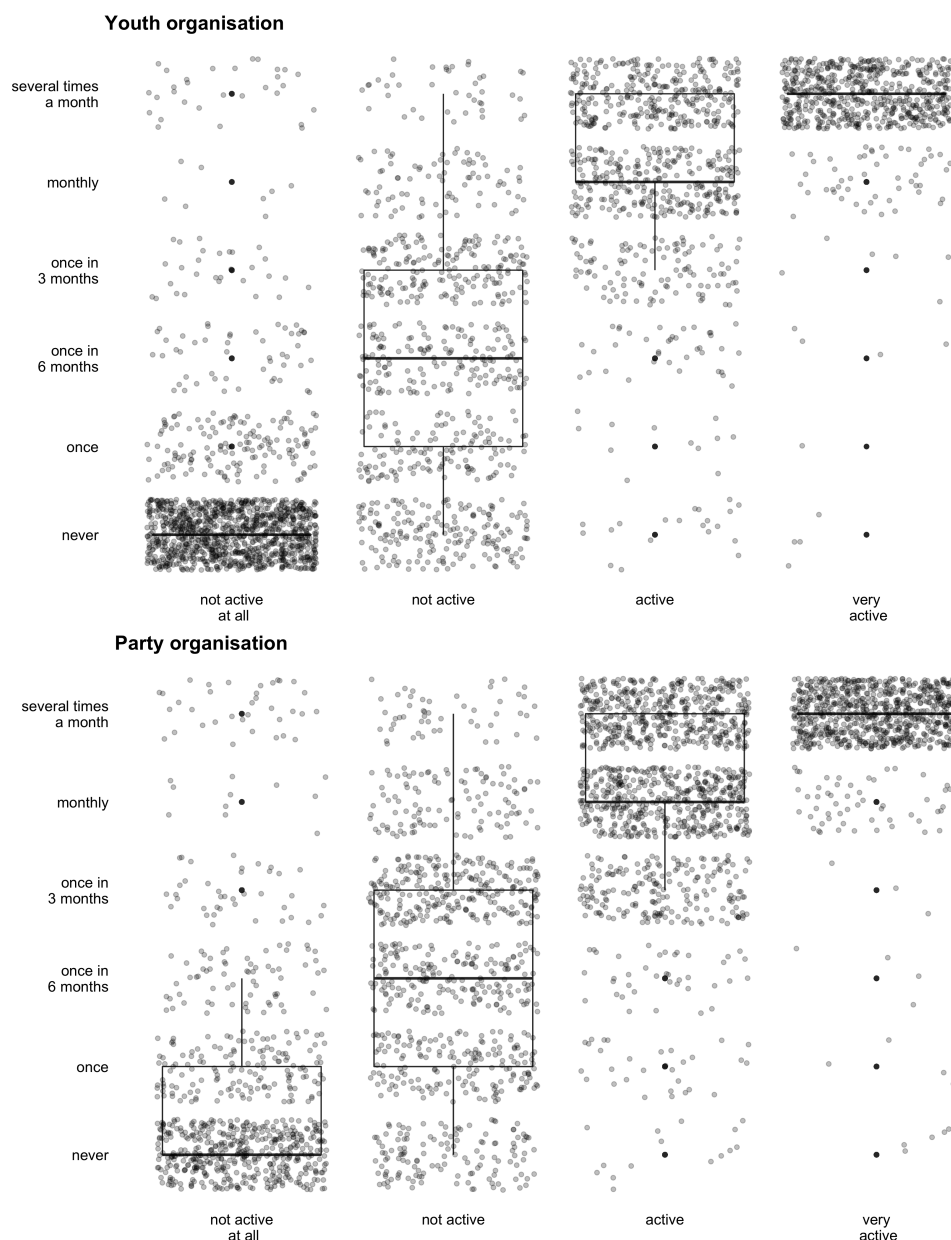
|   | <i>value</i>         | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|----------------------|------------------|--------------|
| SPDpriorities: Lower taxes and charges                                  | important            | 2176             | 54%          |
|   | very important       | 1177             | 29%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 69               | 2%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| SPDpriorities: Protect the environment                                  | not at all important | 898              | 22%          |
|   | not important        | 2018             | 50%          |
|   | important            | 809              | 20%          |
|   | very important       | 156              | 4%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 125              | 3%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| SPDpriorities: Foster European Integration                              | not at all important | 236              | 6%           |
|   | not important        | 1650             | 41%          |
|   | important            | 1781             | 44%          |
|   | very important       | 257              | 6%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 82               | 2%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| SPDpriorities: Fight crime  | not at all important | 89               | 2%           |
|   | not important        | 660              | 16%          |
|   | important            | 2087             | 52%          |
|   | very important       | 1071             | 27%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 99               | 2%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| SPDpriorities: Reduce social inequalities                               | not at all important | 506              | 13%          |
|   | not important        | 1925             | 48%          |
|   | important            | 1190             | 30%          |
|   | very important       | 208              | 5%           |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 177              | 4%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| SPDpriorities: Reduce racial inequalities                               | not at all important | 109              | 3%           |
|   | not important        | 465              | 12%          |
|   | important            | 1585             | 40%          |
|   | very important       | 1793             | 45%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 54               | 1%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| SPDpriorities: Foster gender equality                                   | not at all important | 79               | 2%           |
|   | not important        | 588              | 15%          |
|   | important            | 1917             | 48%          |
|   | very important       | 1353             | 34%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 69               | 2%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| In five years: hold a position within the SPD or a mandate for the SPD? | not at all important | 71               | 2%           |
|   | not important        | 309              | 8%           |
|   | important            | 1675             | 42%          |
|   | very important       | 1893             | 47%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 58               | 1%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
| In five years: hold a position in government or public administration?  | not at all likely    | 560              | 14%          |
|   | not very likely      | 939              | 23%          |
|   | likely               | 1575             | 39%          |
|   | very likely likely   | 773              | 19%          |
|   | <i>Missing</i>       | 159              | 4%           |
|   |                      |                  |              |
|   | not at all likely    | 1123             | 28%          |

| <i>value</i>  | <i>frequency</i> | <i>share</i> |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| not very likely                                       | 1402             | 35%          |
| likely  | 949              | 24%          |
| very likely likely                                    | 295              | 7%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 237              | 6%           |
| In five years: have withdrawn SPD membership?         |                  |              |
| not at all likely                                     | 1618             | 40%          |
| not very likely                                       | 1554             | 39%          |
| likely  | 425              | 11%          |
| very likely likely                                    | 153              | 4%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 256              | 6%           |
| In five years: support another party or organization? |                  |              |
| not at all likely                                     | 1890             | 47%          |
| not very likely                                       | 1212             | 30%          |
| likely  | 440              | 11%          |
| very likely likely                                    | 185              | 5%           |
| <i>Missing</i>  | 279              | 7%           |

**Table A.4: Comprehensive frequencies of the survey items**, indicating all values and missing items.

## A.8 Bivariate Results of the Survey for Chapter 3

### Activity of the Party Members



**Figure A.2: Activity level of the party members** in the youth organisation (left) and the party organisation, comparing frequency of activities and self assessment of activity level. y-axis shows results of the questions "How often did you spent time in the past 12 months on activities?", x-axis shows answers to the question "How active would you say are you generally?", both questions were separately asked for youth organisation and party organisation. Each dot represents one case. Darker shades represent more cases in the respective area.

## Elected Positions of the Party Members

|                             |                | Elected to a position in the youth organisation |                 |              |              |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Elected to a party position |                | <i>Currently</i>                                | <i>Formerly</i> | <i>Never</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Currently                   | <i>N</i>       | 635   | 322             | 477          | 1434         |
|                             | <i>N/row</i>   | 44 %  | 23 %            | 33 %         | 38 %         |
|                             | <i>N/col</i>   | 66 %  | 39 %            | 24 %         |              |
|                             | <i>N/total</i> | 17 %  | 9 %             | 13 %         |              |
| Formerly                    |                | 73  | 310             | 122          | 505          |
|                             |                | 15 %  | 61 %            | 24 %         | 13 %         |
|                             |                | 8 %   | 37 %            | 6 %          |              |
|                             |                | 2 %   | 8 %             | 3 %          |              |
| Never                       |                | 259   | 203             | 1361         | 1823         |
|                             |                | 14 %  | 11 %            | 75 %         | 49 %         |
|                             |                | 27 %  | 24 %            | 69 %         |              |
|                             |                | 7 %   | 5 %             | 36 %         |              |
| Total                       |                | 967   | 835             | 1960         | 3762         |
|                             |                | 26 %  | 22 %            | 52 %         |              |

**Table A.5: Share of members elected to a position** in the youth organisation and the party organisation. Answers to the question: "Have you ever been elected to a position within ... the Jusos? ... the SPD?".

|            |                 | Party            |                 |              | Youth organisation |                 |              |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
|            |                 | <i>Currently</i> | <i>Formerly</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Currently</i>   | <i>Formerly</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Locally    | <i>N</i>        | 1333             | 464             | 1797         | 705                | 606             | 1311         |
|            | <i>N/row</i>    | 0.742            | 0.258           | 0.887        | 0.538              | 0.462           | 0.719        |
|            | <i>N/column</i> | 0.886            | 0.889           |              | 0.718              | 0.721           |              |
|            | <i>N/total</i>  | 0.658            | 0.229           |              | 0.387              | 0.332           |              |
| Regionally |                 | 142              | 48              | 190          | 202                | 175             | 377          |
|            |                 | 0.747            | 0.253           | 0.094        | 0.536              | 0.464           | 0.207        |
|            |                 | 0.094            | 0.092           |              | 0.206              | 0.208           |              |
|            |                 | 0.07             | 0.024           |              | 0.111              | 0.096           |              |
| Nationally |                 | 30               | 10              | 40           | 75                 | 60              | 135          |
|            |                 | 0.75             | 0.25            | 0.02         | 0.556              | 0.444           | 0.074        |
|            |                 | 0.02             | 0.019           |              | 0.076              | 0.071           |              |
|            |                 | 0.015            | 0.005           |              | 0.041              | 0.033           |              |
| Total      |                 | 1505             | 522             | 2027         | 982                | 841             | 1823         |
|            |                 | 0.742            | 0.258           |              | 0.539              | 0.461           |              |

**Table A.6: Levels of the elected positions** of the currently and formerly elected young members in the party organisation and the youth organisation.



## A.9 Calculation of Variables and Indices

### Post-materialism index

The building of the post-materialism index is comprised of two steps. First, individual political priorities are classified into two groups: materialist items and post-materialist items. The political priorities are a set of variables (policy areas) that the respondents ranked (from 1-8) according to the importance for them (Table A.7). In a second step, the first three classified priorities of each respondent are combined into an index. It is a 4-scale index based on the following scheme. (Table A.8).

| Item                               | Type             | Mean | Median | NA |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------|--------|----|
| Fight unemployment                 | materialist      | 4.00 | 4.00   | 43 |
| Lower taxes and charges            | materialist      | 8.29 | 9.00   | 69 |
| Protecting the environment         | post-materialist | 5.46 | 6.00   | 45 |
| Strengthen European integration    | post-materialist | 5.17 | 5.00   | 46 |
| Fighting crime                     | mat              | 6.91 | 8.00   | 51 |
| Fighting against social inequality | materialist      | 2.25 | 1.00   | 43 |
| Fighting against racial inequality | post-materialist | 4.48 | 4.00   | 43 |
| Fostering gender equality          | post-materialist | 6.23 | 6.00   | 50 |

**Table A.7:** Classification of the **materialist** and **post-materialist** policy areas, distribution and missing values.

| Priority 1       | Priority 2       | Priority 3       | type                   | value |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------|
| materialist      | materialist      | materialist      | Materialist            | 1     |
| materialist      | materialist      | post-materialist | Materialist            | 1     |
| materialist      | post-materialist | materialist      | Mixed materialist      | 2     |
| post-materialist | materialist      | materialist      | Mixed materialist      | 2     |
| materialist      | post-materialist | post-materialist | Mixed post-materialist | 3     |
| post-materialist | materialist      | post-materialist | Mixed post-materialist | 3     |
| post-materialist | post-materialist | materialist      | Post-materialist       | 4     |
| post-materialist | post-materialist | post-materialist | Post-materialist       | 4     |

**Table A.8:** Explanation scheme for the **post-materialism** index.

## Efficacy Distance

The variable *efficacydistance* is build on eight different variables; four variables measure the perceived individual influence on party decision making in different areas and four variables measure how much influence SPD members in general have, both on a four scale. These items are used to construct an efficacy index as the mean of the numeric values of each the four individual efficacy items and the four members' efficacy. The *efficacydistance* variable is constructed as the difference between the individual efficacy index minus the members' efficacy index (see Table A.9). The variable has a range from -3 to 1 and larger values indicate a smaller distance of efficacy between the individual and the average member.

|  | members' efficacy                          |      |      |     | own efficacy |      |      |     |
|--|--|------|------|-----|--------------|------|------|-----|
| <i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>                    | <i>0.69</i>                                |      |      |     | <i>0.79</i>  |      |      |     |
|  | Median                                     | Mean | Mode | NA  | Median       | Mean | Mode | NA  |
| The policies of the SPD                    | 2  | 2.4  | 2    | 89  | 2            | 1.9  | 2    | 111 |
| The nomination of candidates for elections | 3  | 2.6  | 3    | 102 | 2            | 1.9  | 2    | 124 |
| The selection of party leaders             | 2  | 2.0  | 2    | 124 | 1            | 1.5  | 1    | 127 |
| The decision to join a government          | 3  | 2.6  | 3    | 101 | 2            | 1.9  | 1    | 125 |
| efficacy index                             | 2.5  | 2.38 | 2.5  | 201 | 1.75         | 1.8  | 2    | 182 |
| efficacydistance                           | Median: -0.5, Mean: -0.6, Mode: 0, NA: 296 |      |      |     |              |      |      |     |

**Table A.9: Descriptive analysis of the efficacy items.** Four items measure answers to "What do you think, how much influence do SPD members really have on..." and four on "And what do you think, how much influence you personally have?", answers on a 4-scale scheme: (1) *very little influence*, (2) *little influence*, (3) *much influence*, (4) *very much influence*. Efficacy index calculated as mean of the four items above.

## Involvement Distance

The variable *involvementdistance* is built on two variables, each measures a trade off between the involvement of party members in decision making and the requirement for quick leadership decision making on a 10 scale. The first variable measures the ideal state of a party in this trade off and the second variables measures the assessment of the reality in the SPD. The *involvementdistance* variables measures the distance between these two as the difference between the involvement opportunities in the SPD and the involvement opportunities in an ideal party on a scale from -10 to 10. The values have a range from -8 to 10. Higher values indicate that the SPD is perceived to be more hierarchical than the ideal party (Table A.10).

|                                  | involvement, ideal party               |      |      |    | involvement, SPD |      |      |     |
|----------------------------------|--|------|------|----|------------------|------|------|-----|
|                                  | Median                                 | Mean | Mode | NA | Median           | Mean | Mode | NA  |
| trade-off<br>(0..10)             | 6                                      | 5.9  | 7    | 43 | 3                | 3.2  | 2    | 133 |
| involvementdistance<br>(-10..10) | Median: 3, Mean: 2,7, Mode: 2, NA: 146 |      |      |    |                  |      |      |     |

**Table A.10: Descriptive analysis of the involvement items.** Items measure answers to the question: "In democratic parties there are often tensions between the aim of members to be involved in decision making and the need of the party leadership to react quickly to political issues. If you had to decide between these two generally, what would you prefer?" *Leadership should make decision quickly ... Members should always be involved in decision making.* and "And how would you say is the real situation in the SPD currently?" *Leadership makes decisions quickly ... Members are always involved in decision making.*

## Appendix B

### Latent Class Analysis (Chapter 6)

# B.1 Correlation Table of Indicator Variables

|                                     | Supportgoals | Supportperson | Seekinfluence | Meaningful | Change  | Responsibility | Office  | Benefits | Interestingpeople | Information | Networks | Activities |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------|----------------|---------|----------|-------------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| <i>Moral-ideological incentives</i> |              |               |               |            |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Supportperson                       | 0.10***      |               |               |            |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Seekinfluence                       | 0.14***      | 0.02          |               |            |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Meaningful                          | 0.16***      | 0.05**        | 0.12***       |            |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Change                              | 0.19***      | -0.02         | 0.28***       | 0.24***    |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Responsibility                      | 0.14***      | 0.07***       | 0.13***       | 0.22***    | 0.18*** |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| <i>Professional incentives</i>      |              |               |               |            |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Office                              | 0.07***      | 0.09***       | 0.11***       | 0.06***    | 0.05**  | 0.11***        |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Benefits                            | 0.00         | 0.03*         | -0.01         | 0.03*      | -0.05** | 0.01           | 0.24*** |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Interestingpeople                   | 0.09***      | 0.11***       | 0.07***       | 0.12***    | 0.04*   | 0.10***        | 0.16*** | 0.20***  |                   |             |          |            |
| Information                         | 0.12***      | 0.11***       | 0.06***       | 0.18***    | 0.08*** | 0.14***        | 0.07*** | 0.05**   | 0.20***           |             |          |            |
| Networks                            | 0.06***      | 0.13***       | 0.11***       | 0.12***    | 0.04**  | 0.11***        | 0.23*** | 0.30***  | 0.32***           | 0.20***     |          |            |
| <i>Social incentives</i>            |              |               |               |            |         |                |         |          |                   |             |          |            |
| Activities                          | 0.18***      | 0.08***       | 0.18***       | 0.23***    | 0.20*** | 0.11***        | 0.17*** | 0.01     | 0.13***           | 0.17***     | 0.19***  |            |
| Likeminded                          | 0.18***      | 0.06***       | 0.16***       | 0.20***    | 0.15*** | 0.07***        | 0.06*** | 0.03*    | 0.24***           | 0.22***     | 0.24***  | 0.24***    |

**Table B.1: Correlation table of membership incentives.** Answers to the question: "Please indicate how important the following reasons where when you joined the SPD: important/not important". Pearson's correlation coefficient between different incentives for joining a party. Correlation significance levels:  $p < .001 = ***$ ,  $p < .01 = **$ ,  $p < .05 = *$ . N=4006.

## B.2 The Formal Latent Class Model

### The Basic Model

The starting point for the latent class model is a contingency table  $Y$  of the observed variables. The size of this table is determined by the number of observed variables  $J$  and the number  $R$  of response categories of each observed variable.  $Y$  has  $\prod_1^J R_j$  cells, where  $J$  is the number of items and  $R_j$  the number of levels of item  $j$ . Each cell in this table represents one potential response pattern  $y_i$  to the observed variables.

The basic latent class model for  $C$  exhaustive and mutually exclusive latent classes  $c_i$  is defined as the probability function  $f(y_i)$  of the response vector  $y_i$ . Each subject has a particular probability  $P(v_i = c)$  to belong to a particular latent lass  $c_i$ . The function  $f(y_i)$  is defined as:

$$f(y_i) = \sum_{c=1}^C P(v_i = c) f(y_i | v_i = c). \quad (\text{B.1})$$

This basic assumption of a mixture model is combined with the assumption that the responses to the  $J$  item are mutually independence under the condition of a subject's class membership. This implies that the joint density of the response vector  $y_i$ ,  $f(y_i | v_i = c)$  is a product of the  $J$  item specific densities  $f(y_{ij} | v_i = c)$ . This is expressed as followed:

$$f(y_i | v_i = c) = \prod_{j=1}^J f(y_{ij} | v_i = c). \quad (\text{B.2})$$

Based on these two assumptions, the model for  $f(y_i)$  is defined as:

$$f(y_i) = \sum_{c=1}^C P(v_i = c) \prod_{j=1}^J f(y_{ij} | v_i = c). \quad (\text{B.3})$$

$f(y_{ij} | v_i = c)$  is the probability of someone in latent class  $c$  to give the response  $r$  to item  $j$ . In the case of a latent class model with categorical indicator variables, this probability is defined as the product of the appropriate parameters  $\phi_{jrc}$  with  $R_j$  as the number of categories of item  $j$ , and  $y_{ijr}^* = 1$  if  $y_{ji} = r$  and  $y_{ijr}^* = 0$  otherwise (Collins and Lanza 2013, 41; Bacher and Vermunt 2010; Vermunt 2010):

$$f(y_{ij}|v_i = c) = \prod_{r=1}^{R_j} \phi_{jrc}^{y_{ijr}^*}. \quad (\text{B.4})$$

The parameters of the latent class model are estimated using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation techniques. The log-likelihood function to be maximised is based on the probability densities outlined in (B.3) and is defined as (Linzer and Lewis 2010; Vermunt 2010):

$$\ln L = \sum_{i=1}^N \ln f(y_i). \quad (\text{B.5})$$

### The Latent Class Regression Model

Like in the basic latent class model, there is a set of  $J$  observed variables with  $R_j$  response categories.  $L$  is the latent variable with  $c = 1, \dots, C$  number of classes. The latent class regression model includes the set of covariates  $X = (x_1, \dots, x_n)$ . The probability function  $f(y_i)$  of the regression model is defined analogue to equation B.3 given the covariates  $X$ :

$$f(y_i|X = x) = \sum_{c=1}^C \gamma_t(x) \prod_{j=1}^J \prod_{r_j=1}^{R_j} \phi_{jrc}^{y_{ijr}^*}. \quad (\text{B.6})$$

The difference between the basic model and the regression model is the term  $\gamma_t(x)$ , which replaces the term  $P(v_i = c)$  (the latent class prevalences) in B.3.  $\gamma_t(x)$  is defined as standard baseline-category multinominal logistic model with covariates  $X$  and coefficients  $\beta_0, \dots, \beta_n$  (Collins and Lanza 2013, 153; Linzer and Lewis 2010):

$$\gamma_t(x) = P(L = c|X = x) = \frac{e^{\beta_{0c} + \beta_{1c}x_1 + \dots + \beta_{nc}x_n}}{1 + \sum_{c'=1}^{C-1} e^{\beta_{0c'} + \beta_{1c'}x_1 + \dots + \beta_{nc'}x_n}} \quad (\text{B.7})$$



### B.3 Latent Class Regression Results

#### Forward Testing of the Latent Class Regression Model

| Variables in the model   | p     | BIC   | $R^2$  |
|--|-------|-------|--------|
| Null model   | –     | 54103 | –      |
| <i>Single covariates</i>   |       |       |        |
| child  | 0.435 | 54118 | -0.002 |
| working  | 0     | 54086 | -0.001 |
| beforeactive   | 0     | 54095 | -0.001 |
| education  | 0     | 53969 | 0.001  |
| joinage  | 0     | 54062 | -0.001 |
| union  | 0     | 54068 | -0.001 |
| parentsmember  | 0.008 | 54110 | -0.001 |
| activeseek   | 0.007 | 54109 | -0.001 |
| <i>Control variables</i>   |       |       |        |
| women  | 0.105 | 54115 | -0.002 |
| duration   | 0     | 53922 | 0.002  |
| <i>Multiple covariates</i>   |       |       |        |
| education, joinage   | 0     | 53913 | 0.006  |
| education, joinage, union  | 0     | 53893 | 0.003  |
| education, joinage, union, working                                     | 0.002 | 53897 | 0.003  |
| education,joinage,union,working,beforeactive                           | 0     | 53893 | 0.004  |
| education,joinage,union,working,beforeactive,parentsmember             | 0.517 | 53909 | 0.004  |
| education,joinage,union,working,beforeactive,activeseek                | 0.002 | 53898 | 0.004  |
| <i>Multiple covariates and control variables</i>                       |       |       |        |
| education,joinage,union,working,beforeactive,activeseek,duration       | 0     | 53845 | 0.005  |
| education,joinage,union,working,beforeactive,activeseek,duration,women | 0.074 | 53856 | 0.005  |

**Table B.2: Significance tests for the latent class regression model.** Forward step-by-step model development based on the significance test and BIC and  $R^2$  comparison.  $R^2 = R^2$  adj. (McFaddon), p = result of the  $\chi^2$  statistics of the log-likelihood comparison with the model in the line above.  $-2(l_1 - l_2)$  is  $\chi^2$ -distributed with  $df = p_2 - p_1$  (number of estimated parameters), M1 is the model without the additional covariate, M2 the model that needs to be tested (Collins and Lanza 2013, 154). Grey highlights the chosen model.

## Appendix C

# Regression Diagnostics and Effect Plots (Chapter 7)

## C.1 Model on Future Career Perspectives

| Model  | BIC      | Anova ( $\chi^2$ test) | Mean error | $R^2$ adj. |
|--|----------|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Attitudes  | 10179.00 | 0.00                   | 67%        | 0.00       |
| Resources  | 9617.00  | 0.00                   | 68%        | 0.05       |
| Incentives   | 10059.00 | 0.00                   | 67%        | 0.01       |
| Latent classes                                       | 9961.00  | 0.00                   | 67%        | 0.02       |
| Control  | 10160.00 | 0.00                   | 67%        | 0.00       |
| Model F1 (Attitudes, Control)                        | 10194.00 | 0.00                   | 67%        | 0.01       |
| Model F2 (Attitudes, Incentives, Control)            | 10121.00 | 0.00                   | 67%        | 0.02       |
| Model F3 (Attitudes, Incentives, Resources, Control) | 9646.00  | 0.00                   | 69%        | 0.07       |
| Model F4 (Full model)                                | 9506.00  | 0.00                   | 70%        | 0.09       |

**Table C.1: Regression diagnostics for the models on future perspectives.** BIC, results of the anova  $\chi^2$  test against the null model, Share of correctly predicted cases (absolute mean error) and  $R^2$  adj. (McFaddon).

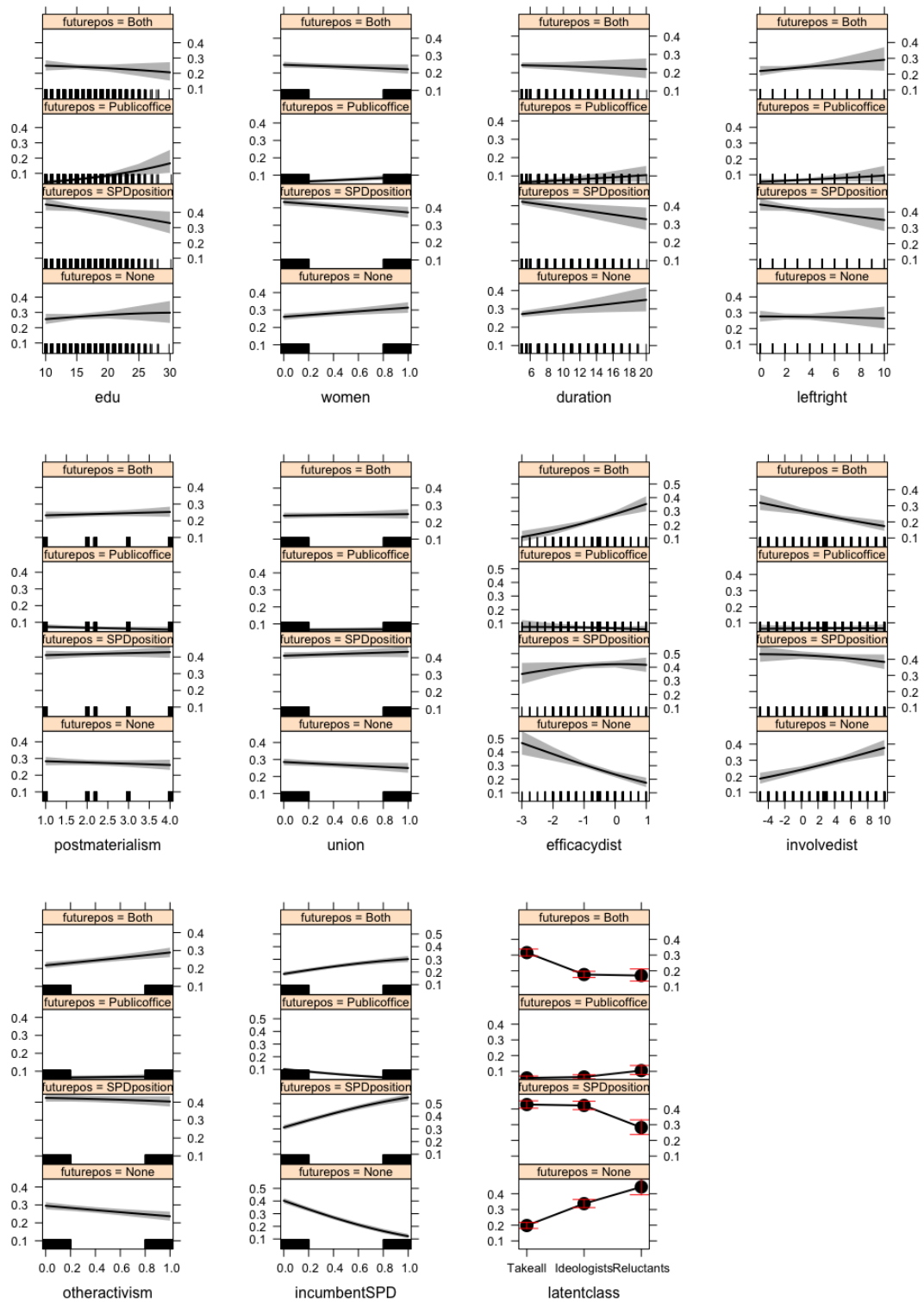
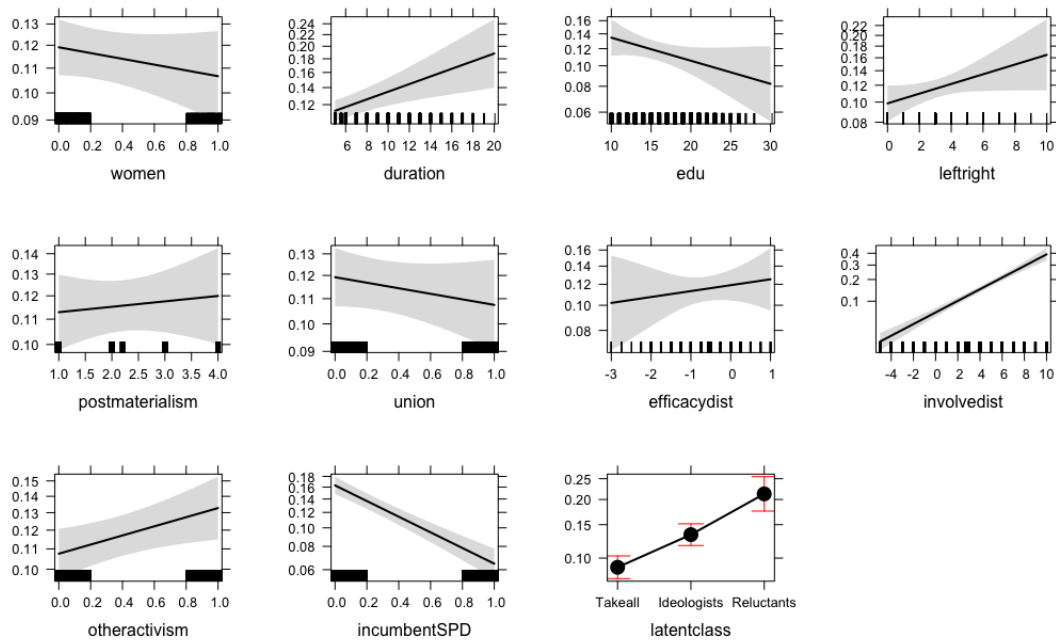


Figure C.1: Effect plots of Model F4. Effects for all values of each covariate, other covariates kept at mean. Y-axis shows the probability for each value of the dependent variable.

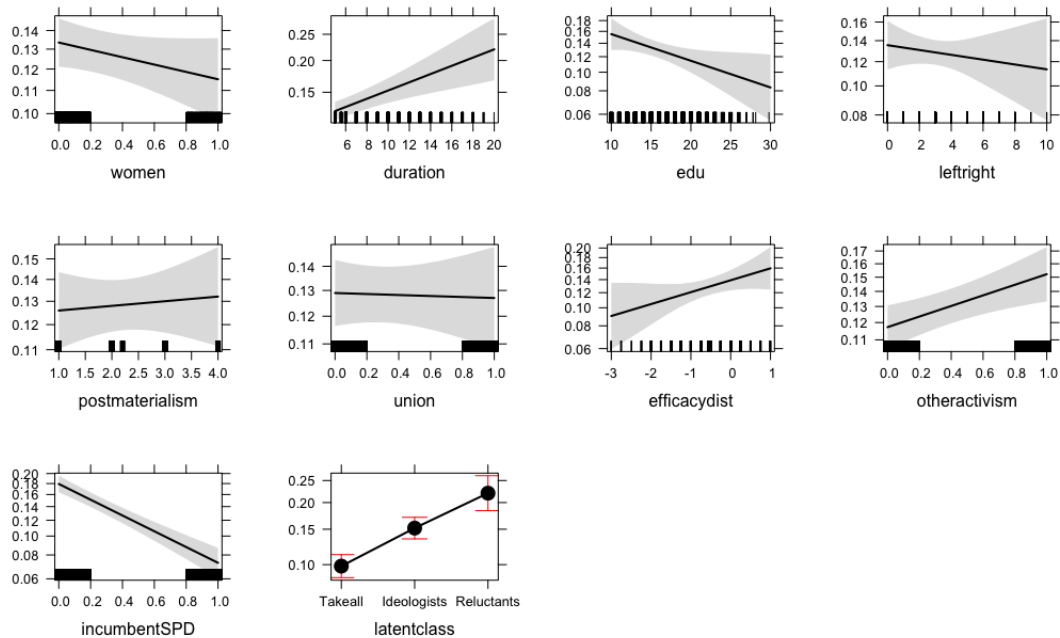
## C.2 Model on Exit Likelihood

| Model  | BIC     | Anova ( $\chi^2$ test) | Mean error | $R^2$ adj. |
|--|---------|------------------------|------------|------------|
| Attitudes  | 3338.00 | 0.79                   | 0.75       | -0.00      |
| Incentives   | 3168.00 | 0.00                   | 0.77       | 0.05       |
| Resources  | 3238.00 | 0.00                   | 0.76       | 0.03       |
| Latent Classes                                       | 3269.00 | 0.00                   | 0.76       | 0.02       |
| Control  | 3325.00 | 0.00                   | 0.75       | 0.00       |
| Model E1 (Attitudes, Control)                        | 3347.00 | 0.01                   | 0.75       | 0.00       |
| Model E2 (Attitudes, Incentives, Control)            | 3198.00 | 0.00                   | 0.77       | 0.05       |
| Model E3 (Attitudes, Incentives, Resources, Control) | 3106.00 | 0.00                   | 0.77       | 0.08       |
| Model E4 (Full model)                                | 3070.00 | 0.00                   | 0.78       | 0.10       |
| Model E5 (without involvedistance)                   | 3229.00 | 0.00                   | 0.76       | 0.05       |

**Table C.2: Regression diagnostics for the models on exit likelihood.** BIC, results of the anova  $\chi^2$  test against the null model, Share of correctly predicted cases (absolute mean error) and  $R^2$  adj. (McFaddon).



**Figure C.2: Effect plots of Model E4.** Effects for all values of each covariate, other covariates kept at mean. Note that efficacydistance, women, union, postmaterialism and leftright are not significant on the 0.05 level. Y-axis shows the probability for each value of the dependent variable.



**Figure C.3: Effect plots of Model E5,** without *involvementdistance* as covariate. Effects for all values of each covariate, other covariates kept at mean. Note that efficacydistance, women, union, postmaterialism and leftright are not significant on the 0.05 level. Y-axis shows the probability for each value of the dependent variable.